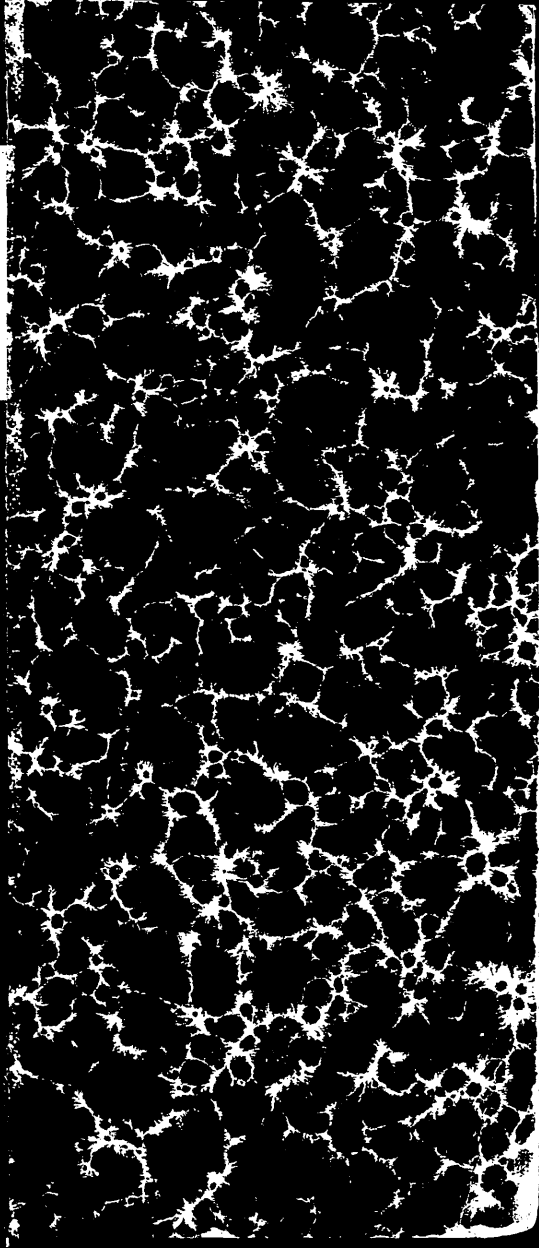
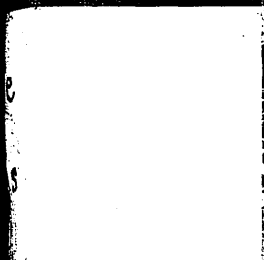


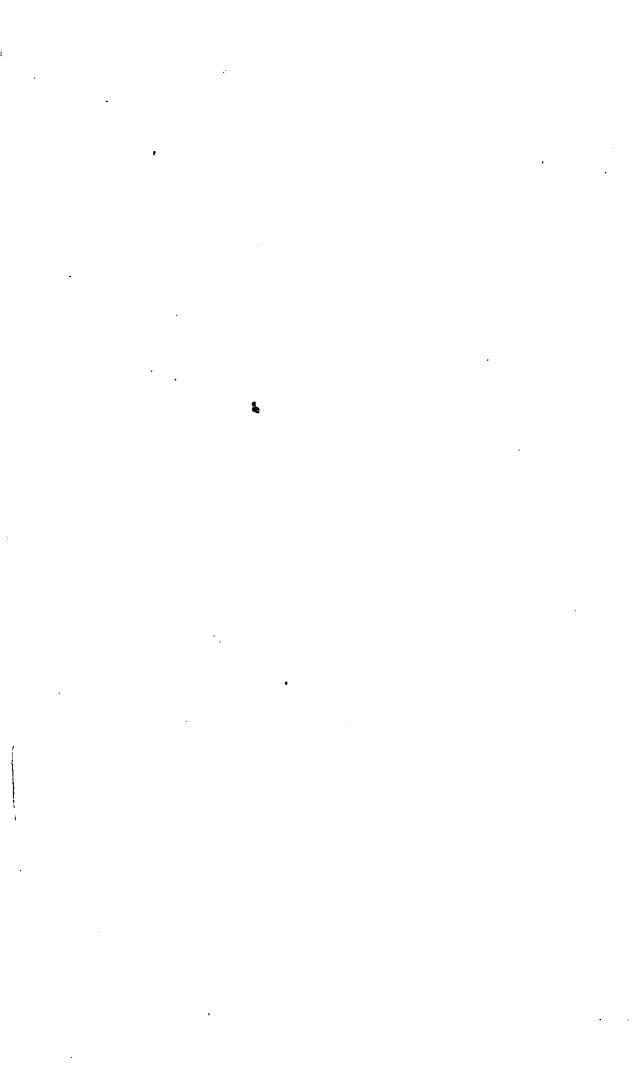


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S.
CHARIS:
OR,
REFLECTIONS,
CHIEFLY,
UPON THE OFFICE
OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT
IN
THE SALVATION OF MEN.

Serle. Ambrose.

THE SECOND EDITION.

*The Secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and his
Covenant to make them to know it. Psal. xxv. 14. Margin.*

*Not by might, nor by power, but by my SPIRIT, saith the
LORD of Hosts. Zech. iv. 6.*

By the GRACE of GOD, I am what I am. 1 Cor. xv. 10.

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PREFACE.

THE following Reflections originated, at some distance from town, in a conversation, with which the author was lately indulged in the company of two pious clergymen. The principal question, which occurred, was; "Whether a man of the world, one unrenewed and unchanged in heart and life, could really and sincerely desire the gift of divine grace, *ex mero motu*, or from his own excitement, or (what is quite the same) without the gracious agency of the Spirit of God." The text in Luke xi. 13, was quoted; but a doubt arose, how far it could apply to the point before us. The author was, therefore, led to make this text the ground of inquiry; but, in proceeding upon it, he proposed nothing more than a short essay, chiefly for his own satisfaction, without the least design of extending the subject beyond the limits of a sheet or two of paper. This may account for the seeming abruptness at the beginning. One reflection, however, led on to another, which, ap-
 pearing

pearing in some degree to affect the question, he knew not how to suppress; and thus the matter grew up to its present size, for which he can offer no apology but the importance, which it seems to bear, to every serious mind. If there be any thing right and proper in these thoughts, which he ventures to submit to the public eye, as he would hope there is; and if they may, in the least respect, be blessed to promote the interests of truth, or detect the incursions of error, in “the household of faith;” he prays to ascribe all such effects to HIM, who is “the Author of every good and perfect gift,” and “without whom, nothing is strong, nothing is holy.”

January, 1803.

REFLECTIONS.

REFLECTIONS, &c.

§ 1. THE Holy Scriptures every where represent Man as a *fallen* Creature — in consequence of this *fall*, a weak, unwise, and helpless Creature—not only so, but in a state of enmity with God; contrary in disposition to his will, dark in understanding to his wisdom, dead in spirit to his life.

§ 2. In this state of Man, Redemption is proclaimed as accomplished by a Saviour — a free one, without his previous desire; a full one, above his thoughts; a powerful one, beyond his strength.

§ 3. It is all of *mercy*, by a Covenant established in the heavens—It is

all of *grace*, by a free bestowment, without regard to man's merit—It is all of everlasting Love, from the three Divine Persons in one JEHOVAH, or God-head, who have engaged to render it effectual, in all its objects, whether of persons or things, according to their distinct, yet united, engagements in this everlasting Covenant, revealed by the Holy Ghost, and published in the Scriptures.

§ 4. There is, therefore, an *election of grace*, redeeming out of the world those, who are called *the heirs of Salvation*, and who are brought forward, in their several places and times, to the gifts of faith and holiness, and to the certain enjoyment of the ultimate purposes of this Election. Providence, in its own appointed way and time, brings these heirs of salvation under means, or means to them: and Grace renders those means effectual to incipient

cipient Conversion, and to final Salvation. From the very nature of the Covenant of God, which is *ordered in all things and sure*, the persons elected must be certain, and therefore fore-known, respecting their interest in it, as the inheritance to which they are chosen is also certain and fore-ordained. God hath made the universe in *number, weight, and measure*, that is, with perfect exactness in every respect; and surely he must be expected to have wrought his greatest work of all, the redemption of myriads of souls, with no less perfection. Hence, the Church of God, which receives its very name from its *Calling* of God, and which forms the consummated “number of his elect,” who were CHOSEN IN CHRIST *before the foundation of the world*, is represented as a perfect mathematical square in the book of Revelation; and,

in all the Scriptures, as a complete Temple, as a perfect or un mutilated Body under Christ, the one and the only Head; and by other images of similar precision, completeness, or inseparable union.

§ 5. Whatever, then, militates against this truth, or is not in just agreement with it, cannot be true. For, as contraries cannot be reconciled at all; so incongruities are not to be imputed to the wisdom of the Holy One. He, Jehovah, who cannot err or lie, hath stated this solemn decree, and hath made the matter plain enough in his Word to those, who have Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, and an understanding Heart given them truly to believe. And though they may not be able to solve all difficulties, which occur in some sublime truths, through the natural defect and weakness of the human understanding; yet,

yet, this plain and solemn doctrine, which may be considered as an essential pillar of divine revelation, cannot be removed from its place, without appearing at least to overthrow or endanger the whole fabric of man's redemption. But, *the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: AND, Let every one, that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.*

§ 6. This being premised; what is to be understood by the expression of our Lord;—"How much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke xi. 13.

Two obvious points are contained in the words:

1. The GIFT of the Holy Spirit:
2. The PERSONS, to whom the Holy Spirit is given;—namely, to them,

that ask this *gift* of *their* Heavenly Father.

And who, of himself, is sufficient to think or to speak of these great things! May my mind therefore be rightly prepared to consider matters of such high importance! For this end, lead me, Thou Spirit of Grace, into the wisdom and mercy of thine holy office. Suffer me not to err; for, though but a mean and unworthy witness for Thee, I would speak thy truth in love, to the edification of my brethren and of my own soul. Neither suffer me to fear; but, as a faithful witness, give me power in this cause to declare thy truth, thy whole truth, and nothing but thy truth, according to thy will and word!

§ 7. 1. *The GIFT of the Holy Spirit.* What are we to understand by these words?

Certainly,

Certainly, not the Power of effecting miraculous Operations ; for these were only intended, at the time and for a time, to be evidential Demonstrations of the Divine Mission of our Lord and his Apostles, or almost immediate followers ; and, of course, have long since ceased, their purpose having been fully accomplished. Nor does the gift of the Holy Spirit imply Visions, Raptures, or any enthusiastic Appearances or Impressions ; for these can be no Proofs now of Truths already communicated and proved ; nor are they promised in the standard of truth to any man, because they are no longer necessary for the establishment of faith, and because the salvation of believers is carried on without them.

The Gift of the Spirit, then, must be understood agreeably to the declarations made in the Scriptures concerning

cerning his office in the Covenant of Grace ; which declarations import all that is necessary to be known and realized for the conversion, edification, and final happiness, of those persons who are interested in it ; or, in other words, the whole Church of God from the beginning to the end of the world. It does not imply or impart any new revelation, but enables the mind to understand and digest, so far as is necessary for each man's particular welfare, the revelation already given and established, which contains in it the whole plan and accomplishment of human redemption.

Accordingly ; we find, that the great leading objects of this *Paraclete*, this *Promise of the Father*, this *Sent-one of the Son*, this indispensable Agent of Salvation, are such as these ; —to enliven, to enlighten, to renew the soul, and to translate it from the
kingdom

kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son — to impress upon it, as a mean to this end, a deep sense of the spirituality and condemning force of the Holy Law, by which the soul feels its bondage, beholds its ruin, abhors itself with *Job* “in dust and ashes,” and is made, more or less, cuttingly or keenly alive to the horrible nature of sin and to the inborn sinfulness of the heart, in all its desires, passions, and powers. This operation is called in the holy Scriptures a *quickening with Christ, a resurrection from the death of trespasses and sins, a new life from the dead*; because, till this solemn event passes upon the soul, it is without true sense or knowledge of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of its own real state and condition, of the deep malignity of sin, of the falsehood and folly of self-righteousness, and of the purport of the Scriptures,

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which

which point out these truths, and which, plain as they are in themselves, are not understood and cannot be understood by the natural man, nor by any man, but as he is taught by the effective and internal energy of the Holy Ghost. When this first and very essential work is, according to the divine purpose, wrought within the soul, the Holy Spirit carries on his sacred office, by presenting the grace and glory of the Gospel to the eyes of the mind, and by establishing that principle of life, which is called the *new man*, the *inner man*, the *new-birth*, a *new creation*, &c. and then he enables the soul, through this principle of gracious life, both to receive faith as his free and blessed gift, and to act faith by his influential power; and then afterwards, in the course of faithful acts, humbly and meekly to embrace Christ in all his offices,
for

for pardon, righteousness, peace, sanctification, and redemption. By the precious gift of this living, or lively, faith in Christ, the darkness and doubts, always incident to man's fallen reason, are gradually dispelled, and the mind lifted up above the vain janglings and disputes of ungracious and unenlightened men, *destitute of the truth*, to whom the *gain* of nature in one way or other is all the godliness they know or desire. In this way it is, that these words are verified; *he that is spiritual, judgeth all things*, (i.e. all things relative to spiritual life,) *yet he himself is judged of no man*—of no man, unacquainted with this gracious faith, which is both the activity and principle of that spiritual life. In doing this great work for the soul, the Holy Spirit imparts light, silences doubts, casts down reasonings, which are at best but coloured doubts and of-

ten impudent blasphemies, and fixes the heart upon Christ as its only rock and refuge, with an ardent desire to renounce all help and all hope beside this Lord of Glory. The Holy Spirit, in farther carrying on this business, raises love to Christ within the breast, and a sanctified affection to every person, truth, or circumstance, which appears to belong to him. The happy partaker of this mercy is framed, by succeeding degrees of growth or edification, into the image of Christ; delights in this spiritual frame of mind; and in all the holy tempers of the Redeemer; follows his footsteps, as nearly as may be, by the help of the Spirit; loves the will of God; and becomes resigned to it, more and more under all circumstances of sickness or health, joy or sorrow, life or death. In the course of thus raising the soul to spiritual and heavenly things, the
 Holy

Holy Spirit gradually weans it from the idol *self*, that closest of dangers and of snares ; mortifies the flesh, with its affections and lusts ; subdues sin for the Christian, not only in its outward and palpable acts, but in its secret workings on the imagination, and in its most interior ebullitions or risings ; to all which self-righteous persons are very much strangers, and the unrighteous are willing to remain so. By this proceeding, the Holy Spirit also deadens the heart to the love of the world and its vain pursuits ; and, at the same time, makes it tremblingly alive to the danger of its snares, the variable weakness of the flesh, the deep subtlety and impetuosity of Satan. Under these impressions, he leads the soul to faith and prayer for watchfulness, for deliverance, for victory, for final safety, and true happiness. The soul becomes thus more
and

and more strengthened and refreshed by the agency and teaching of the Holy One, finds joy and peace in believing, exercises itself in every good word and work prepared by Providence for it, rejoices not in iniquity but in the truth, is daily ripening for heaven and glory, is supported in trials, sickness, and death, and at last obtains a safe, if not an *abundant, entrance into the kingdom of God.*

This is a short sketch of the manifold blessings, mercies, struggles, trials, and victories, implied under the operations of grace in the soul, or, what is the same, the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

§ 8. 2. We are next to consider the PERSONS, to whom the Holy Spirit is given—namely, to them, *that ask this Gift of their heavenly Father.*

And

And who are these, but the Children of God?—His Children, *born of his Spirit*;—His own, *by Adoption and Grace*—*Regenerate*, and *renewed in the spirit of their minds*, and so having *the same mind with him*.—Taught and enabled to cry, without falsehood and without hypocrisy, *ABBA, Father*—His *heirs*, and *joint-heirs with Christ*—God's *Family, Portion, and Inheritance*.

Who, beside these, can truly ask for the Holy Spirit, *knowing for what* they ask? Who, but the Children of God, can sincerely pray for his Spirit to lead them into these truths, which are calculated to humble them to the dust, while Christ the Saviour is alone to be exalted? Who can ask, for instance, to be *quickened from the death of trespasses and sins*, but those, who know what the death of sins means, and who groan to be delivered from it,

as persons beginning to be *alive from the dead*? Who can ask for repentance to be granted them unto life eternal, but those, who feel their deplorable state by nature, and are alarmed at their present condition? Who can pray for faith, without knowing the nature or the worth of this indispensable mercy? Who can seek to be taught, but those, who are sensible of their own ignorance? Who can petition for spiritual strength, but those, who fear to perish from their own inherent weakness? Who can desire pardon, but sinners condemned by the law and their own consciences? or who plead the righteousness of another to justify them in the sight of infinite Holiness, but they, who are convinced that no human righteousness can save them? Who can beseech the Lord to grant them true holiness, but they who, through the Divine Spirit, have
been

been led to the abhorrence of sin in their mortal bodies ; or who, but they, really desire of this gracious Spirit to *mortify the deeds of the body*, and to *crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts*? Can flesh desire to crucify flesh, or that, which is vile and wicked, love purity and righteousness, or that which is dead quicken itself, or any effect act against its cause, or above it, or without it? Our Lord tells us, that *what is born of the flesh, is flesh*,* and must consequently proceed according to its own vile nature and propensities ; and that, *what is born of the Spirit, is spirit*, and can alone

* It is observable, that *Leaven* and *Flesh* in the Old Testament are signified, in the original, by the same word. Hence, the Apostle's exhortation to purge out *the old leaven*, that is, *the flesh with its affections and lusts*, which cannot follow Christ, nor can be conjoined with him as the believer's passover, righteousness, or propitiation.

rise, therefore, to spiritual life, and its concomitant properties.

Let me not, however, be mistaken in this matter. I am not speaking of the *use* or *duty* of prayer, nor of forms of prayer, or prayer extemporaneous. All men, unless those perhaps of the utmost impiety, are agreed, that supplications to God are becoming in his intelligent creatures, who live by his bounty ; and that all should be taught the necessity of this duty. But my present object of consideration is the *power* of performing spiritual and gracious prayer, the prayer of the heart to God in Christ, for all the mercies of redemption, and for the greatest purification of the soul by his Holy Spirit. This, in other words, is the *prayer of faith*, from grace for grace, to which every blessing is promised ; not the dry and dull prayer of the *lips* only, which, if the heart be
not

not right, is said to be *an abomination to the Lord*. Of true prayer the judicious *Hooker* has well observed, that “God’s heavenly inspirations and our holy desires are as so many angels of intercourse between him and us;” and that prayer of this kind “is the first thing wherewith a righteous life beginneth, and the last wherewith it doth end.”* We are also taught by a higher authority, that *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*; because such a man, being justified by faith, is from a state of sin translated to a state of righteousness, and so hath the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him, by which he is enabled to pray thus fervently and effectually, according to the will of God.

§ 9. But the children of this world, while such, or as such, can sincerely

ask for no such Gift as the Holy Spirit, or for the efficient Graces that flow from him. They desire not the knowledge of God, nor of his ways; for they are *always hard and grievous* to them, and, if not quite *out of their sight* or apprehension, they find obstacles enough both for stoppage and stumbling. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* He must, therefore, be renewed or be born of the Spirit, before he can discern the worth of spiritual things, or truly ask for them. He must be previously changed in heart, or he cannot in true earnestness seek for the mortification of his sinful flesh, and for the life of Christ, contrary as it is to that flesh, to be made manifest in his mortal body. Unless he be
 quickened

quickened into spiritual life, he hath nothing but his mere natural life, which, being depraved, craves only for itself, and for its own gratifications, whether refined or flagitious, in the ways of the world. If he be not delivered from the bondage of *the strong one armed* by a superior power, he is in continual *captivity to the Law of sin in his members*; and is so far from understanding the sacred, pure, and gracious *Liberty of the Children of God*, that it is not from want of inclination, if he doth not openly revile and detest it. He hath no true sense of the Love of the Father, or of the Work of Christ in Redemption, or any real desire for the Spirit, as a Spirit of Wisdom and Grace, either to lead him into the true knowledge of God, or to constant knowledge of his own sinful nature and dangerous state, or to the right fellowship

fellowship with him in the paths of godliness and truth. He may ask for the Spirit in words, and so may a prating bird; all the words too may be excellent and sound; but, if in words only, he is far from asking according to the will of God, who hath repeatedly declared, that he regardeth not the lips, but the heart. *St. Paul*, in his natural state, had without doubt often used words of prayer, and of many long prayers too, like other Pharisees; but none of his petitions had the divine acknowledgement of, *Behold, he prayeth*, till *after* his conversion, when he first breathed out supplications, which flowed from life, and were carried up by faith and hope towards Heaven. *Without faith it is impossible to please God*; and as faith is primarily his *gift*, and always carried on by the *operation of his Spirit*, we may be convinced on di-
vine

vine authority, that no *carnal man*, no person *dead in trespasses and sins*, no mortal without the quickening motion of the Holy One inducing spiritual life, or, in other words, none but the *children of God born of his Spirit, the heirs of his salvation*, the living members of *Christ's living Body*, his *Church*, can ask, or seek, or desire, the Gift of the Holy Spirit promised, with all the effects and consequences of this Gift, in order to lift them up above this present evil world, and to lead them to heaven. It is not, indeed, so easy a thing to pray, as many suppose it to be. An apostle requested the pouring forth of the Spirit of grace and supplication for this purpose, knowing that holy prayer can never spring from a carnal heart, which being uncircumcised is therefore out of the bond of the Covenant, and in full enmity with God. All
 prayer

prayer, without the Spirit of Life, is but a carcase without a soul. Prayer likewise presupposes the *weakness*, as well as the *indigence*, of the creature, respecting the things prayed for; and of these no sinner in a state of nature is thoroughly aware.*

§ 10.

* True and faithful are the words of the pious Archbishop LEIGHTON, instructing his readers upon this important subject: — “ When thou ad-dressest thyself in prayer, desire and depend upon the assistance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God; without which thou art not able truly to pray. It is a supernatural work, and therefore the principle of it must be supernatural. He that hath nothing of the Spirit of God cannot pray at all. He may howl in his necessity or distress; or may speak words of prayer, as some birds learn the language of men; but pray he cannot. And they, that have that Spirit, ought to seek the movings and actual workings of it in them in prayer; — the particular *help of their infirmities*, (Hebr. iv. 15,) teaching, both *what* to ask,

§ 10. This conclusion by no means affects the case of those, who feel a concern to pray, but through dejection of soul, arising from convictions of their own sinfulness, weakness, or other infirmity, are afraid either of praying amiss, or of not being of the kind or number of persons, whom God will vouchsafe to hear. These are the very people, who, of all others, have the strongest symptoms of acceptance in their favour; for, if the desire and anxiety be firm and sincere, it is truly *the work of the Holy Spirit* upon their hearts, and is that undoubted token for good, which no hypocrite, no Pharisee on the one hand, or antinomian on the other, ever enjoys

ask, — a thing that of ourselves we know not, — and then *enabling* them to ask; breathing forth their desires in such sighs and groans, as are the breath, not simply of their own, but of God's Spirit." — Comm. on *Peter* iii. 12.

or understands. Such prayers are indeed from *life begun*, and shall surely be crowned with blessing in the event; though the person himself, for the time, or under the trial, cannot make that cheerful reflection. For, though a man can never pray truly and sincerely for spiritual things without the Divine Spirit, yet he may pray, and most really too, before he understands, how, by that holy agency, his heart hath been drawn to pray. Perhaps, the distress may often arise from a sense of deficiency in suitable expressions; but persons in this case may be assured, that earnest breathings are better than fine words, and that their most pathetic and valuable prayers are those, which have the least utterings of the tongue, and can only be vented from the heart in tears and groans. An infant has life, and cries urgently for nourishment and help with very
 little

little comprehension, and no expression, of what it needs, and still less of the manner of its supply ; but it doth not cease to cry on earnestly, importunately, continually, till the supply or relief be administered. So is it at first, more or less, with every one that is born of the Spirit. The prayer of faith (for, prayers like those before-mentioned have true faith in them) proceeds as soon as the soul is made alive to God, and will not cease to be poured forth ; but the clear discernment of this grace by the reflex act of faith, the perception, the evidence, the demonstration, of its existence, come afterwards in the progress of spiritual life. By continual supplies from above, perhaps through a great variety of trials and temptations, the Christian increases in wisdom, and stature, and might, *by the SPIRIT in his inner man*, and at length becomes

fully assured, that it was the Lord himself, who hath wrought and is working the whole in him *both for will and deed of his good pleasure.*

In this view it was, that the Apostle prayed for the Ephesians, *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto them*

THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM :

the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they might know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the

EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER *to us-ward, who believe, according to the WORKING OF HIS MIGHTY POWER.*

—If this Spirit of wisdom, and this mighty power, were necessary for the production of faith and hope in the Ephesians ; who are they, that can believe and understand, without the

same

same assistance? Or, how can any call upon HIM from *the heart, in whom they have not previously believed?*

§ 11. Could we, for a moment, adopt the contrary proposition, and state the origination of a man's turning to God as arising within and from himself; what is the consequence? To be consistent, we must place the Free-will of the creature before the Free-will of the Creator. We must represent the Grace of God to be dependent on the inclination of man, and the redemption of souls to be effectual or ineffectual, as chance, or the flesh, or fleshly wisdom, may induce men either to accept or reject it. With this principle, which equally contradicts the word of truth and the experience of God's children in all ages, comes in a long train of subsequent errors, highly dishonourable to the divine nature, and very repugnant

nant to the peace and spiritual progress of those, who are infected by them. From the presumption of free-will, carnal understanding, and free-agency, assumed by an unenlightened and unmortified sinner, arise that “ignorant” self-righteousness which cannot “submit to the righteousness of God,” that specious wisdom of human reason, which esteems as “foolishness” the “things of the Spirit of God,” and that wrong idea of natural power, which of itself can begin to perform the will of God, and believe in him, and continue to believe and act, by its own innate exertions, with but little or at most a very qualified assistance from above. All this, when fully laid open, is radically as contrary to the plan and spirit of the Gospel of Christ, as were the principles of the ancient Pharisees, or the later tenets of *Pelagius* and *Socinus*.

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And indeed I may, in this place, submit to my reader's particular observation ; That all free-willers, whether they be Pharisees, Formalists, or Libertines ; in a word, all men, who know not the power of God in his word, and have not felt a change of heart as well as taken up an outward reformation of life, make an easy affair of Faith, and do generally maintain, that it is the mere simple act of the human mind from its own native energy, and that, at the most, the Holy Spirit only grants a competent degree of illumination, but leaves the soul as He found it, either to believe or not to believe, as it may determine for itself. This, upon the authority of the Scriptures, is by no means *the faith of God's elect*, to whom Christ is, not only *the wisdom of God* enlightening, but *the power of God* effectually working, to their final salvation.

tion. The devils have such a faith, and perhaps greater faith (if so it may be called) than all natural men have; and though, under its clearness to their intellect, they may tremble more than wicked men do, yet it works no change, either in the one or the other, *for passing from death unto life*, but they remain evil, if not more evil and hardened than ever.

§ 12. But, it has been objected, “Is it not the *Duty* of every man to believe in God?”

The question is proposed, with respect to the present state of man, too absolutely, and very often for a captious purpose. Doubtless, it is the duty of every intelligent being, whether man or angel, upon the plan and nature of their original creation, to love, serve, honor, obey, and believe, the divine Essence, from whom they proceed, and who can enjoin
nothing

nothing but what is perfectly right and true. But the question, as it stands in the present case with relation to man *as fallen*, and to his cordial acceptance of redemption by Christ, is a question of *power*, rather than of absolute *duty*; and, for want of this distinction between man's fallen state and his original creation, it becomes a mere sophism to blind the eyes and delude the heart of those, who have not been deeply *convinced of sin* by the effectual working of the Divine Spirit. There is then a most obvious difference to be made upon the bearing of the question, as it respects those two very opposite states and conditions — man, created perfect and upright under a covenant or constitution of works, which he had full ability to perform — and, man, fallen, ruined, weak, and dead in a spiritual sense, without power,

without desire to perform, or rather with contrariety only to, the righteous will and purity of his Maker. To such an undone creature, the question cannot apply but in a legal point of view, or but in reference to the holy Law, which condemns him in all things and at all times, and would condemn him absolutely under the Gospel itself, if he must stand or fall by the most ardent prayers, the best exercises of faith, or the most holy acts and thoughts of his soul. The law applies to man when upright to justify, and when fallen to condemn him; but to mix this with the grace of the Gospel, and to talk of *duty* in the first instance, where every thing must be of the divine *goodness* and *mercy*, is to displace the order of gracious wisdom, to disparage the glory of gratuitous redemption, and to introduce man as a high and mighty agent, where

where he is at best but a helpless beggar, and must be, in becoming a real Christian, a *broken hearted recipient* of absolute *bounty and favour*.* The confounding duty with

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privilege,

* The Second Council of *Orange*, A. D. 529, to the same effect concluded; "If any man say, that mercy is conferred by God upon us, believing, willing, desiring, endeavouring, laboring, watching, studying, asking, seeking, knocking, *without* the grace of God; but doth not confess, that it is *only* by the infusion and inspiration of the Holy Ghost into us, that we believe, will, and are able to do all these things as we ought to do, and makes the help of grace *to follow after* either humility or obedience, nor will grant that it is by the gift of grace itself, that we are obedient and humble; that man resisteth the Apostle in saying, "*What hast thou, that thou hast not received?*" And, "*By the grace of God, I am what I am.*" See Bishop *Bexeridge* on the 9th Art. of the Church of England. The Bishop might have transcribed the other twenty-four

Canons

privilege, in this case, is mingling Law with Gospel ; and, while it pretends

Canons of this Council, which almost equally bear upon the same point. The Council itself assembled, as also did some other Councils about that age, for the purpose of deciding upon the errors of the Semi-pelagians (or, as they would *now* be termed, the Semi-arminians), which had been broached in the preceding century, to the molestation of the Church. The author of this error is stated to have been *Cassian*, a monk of *Syria*, who settled at *Marseilles*, about the year 430. He and his followers, who formed a considerable party in the South of France, asserted, that, even *before* or *without* the grace of God, man had sufficient free-will; if not truly, to effect any good work, yet certainly to *begin* it, by seeking, knocking, or asking for grace to assist their own endeavors for repentance and conversion. Against this tenet, as contrary to the faith of the Church, *Fulgentius*, the eminent friend of *St. Augustine*, *Prosper* of *Aquitaine*, and other celebrated authors of that time, strenuously contended, and were supported by several particular Councils, and

tends to be careful of the interests of holiness, it actually subverts those interests, by removing (if possible) the main spring by which they can only be carried on, even the free and efficacious operation of the Spirit of God. It does more; it tends, on the one hand, to introduce into an unbroken heart the notions of its own powers and righteousness; and, on the other, to distress the children

and especially by the Second Council of *Orange*, before-mentioned. The Canons of this Council, upon a reference to the then Bishop of Rome, were declared to be "the doctrine of the Church and of the Fathers;" a measure which, without giving much credit to his infallibility, he cannot fairly be supposed to have taken, in the face of the world, either if he doubted of the fact, or if the fact had been otherwise. Several other Bishops of Rome in succession also confirmed the doctrine, as the established sentiment of the primitive Church down to the respective periods in which they lived.

of God, by pointing out to them, as a ground of hope or comfort, their due performance of religious acts, instead of the sole and finished salvation of Christ, and the free grace and mercy set forth in the Gospel. This is not the way of truth, or peace, or holiness. True holiness, as things now are in the world, is the offspring of faith only; and this faith is the gift of God, and imparted to the soul by the gracious and sovereign operation of his Holy Spirit. So that "Faith," as an amiable divine observes, "is not so properly a part of that obedience we *owe* to God, as an inestimable benefit we *receive* from him for Christ's sake."* They, who
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* See eight excellent letters very much upon this subject, and particularly the two last of them, in Mr. NEWTON's *Cardiphonia*, vol. 1. These letters cannot be too much considered by those, who

know not this, know nothing truly
(whatever be their pretensions) either
of

who are inclined to amalgamate Grace and Reason, or substitute the latter for the former, and to insist upon Repentance and Holiness, not as primarily, entirely, and effectually, from a preceding faith, freely given and implanted in the soul by God the Spirit, but as resulting from a man's own reflections and reception of the truth, when openly laid before him. The power of the truth is not *in se*, or in its most convincing arguments, but is derived wholly from the Author of the truth himself, who by his own act applies it to the soul, in such degrees and at such times, as He is pleased to enforce it. To the same purpose says the admirable Archbishop *Leighton*: — “The truth is pure and purifying; yet can it not *of itself* purify the soul, but by the obeying or believing it. And the soul cannot obey or believe, but by the Spirit, which works in it that faith, and by that faith purifies it and works love in it.” *Com. on 1 Pet. chap. i. v. 23.* To the same purpose, also, are the following sentiments of that great divine, *Du Moulin*: — “The
new

of duty or privilege, or, in other words, either of Law or Gospel.

Again.

new man is not created by mere moral suasion, but by the gracious infusion of a new life. The Christian himself believes indeed, and repents; and, so far as regards his repentance, the love of God, and faith, these are certainly acts of the human will; nor can any one believe and repent, unless he be willing: but the grace of God alone creates in us that faith, and supports it when created; preventing the unwilling, that they may have a good will; and leading on the willing with fresh and fresh assistance, that they may not will in vain.—To believe in Christ, then, is not a debt due to the moral law; for, this law in its principle hath nothing to do with Christ or Redemption, but relates to the natural obligation of man as a creature, and therefore enjoins nothing but what man was able to do before his fall. A man before the fall was not bound to believe in Christ, who has relation to sinners only; but to obedience; and an obedience not of faith in another, but of perfect duty from himself. In this point of view, therefore, the Law and Faith are directly

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Again. If Faith in Christ as my Redeemer be a *Duty*, which I am to perform; then it is a *Work*, which I am able to perform; and if it be a *Work*, which I can perform, then it must be a right or demand of the

ly opposed to each other. Gal. iii. 12. He was bound, indeed, to believe in God before he fell, but in Him as his Creator, who could say and do nothing but what was right. But to believe savingly in Christ, after he became a sinner, and consequently incapable, for the remission of sins; this is only or entirely the efficacious work of God in his new creation. To the first motions or inchoation of regeneration, the will of man brings nothing, and is purely passive; nay, with respect to the very first principle of the new man, opposes itself fully with all its might. Afterwards, indeed, when God has begun the work, the will freely and cheerfully moves according to the pleasure of the divine will, and farther increases in its volitions and actings, as it increases in strength."—MOLINÆUS *de lib. arb.* apud *Thes. Sedan.* Vol. i. p. 227, &c.

Law of Works against me, to which I must yield a *perfect* obedience, or remain a transgressor of Law, which can receive nothing less: Faith, then, would not be of *Grace*, which is *given* to those, who are *without strength* and feel its want; who *enter the kingdom of God as a little Child*, owning their ignorance and folly; and who lament with the Apostle, in the 7th Chapter to the Romans, *the Body of Death*, nourished by the strong Law of Sin which is in their members, insuperable by themselves and vanquished only by their omnipotent Deliverer Christ Jesus. If therefore, Faith be not of grace, but of my own working, reasoning, or endeavouring; then it appears in flat contradiction to the Holy Scriptures, which state, that Christians are *saved and called* of God, *with a holy calling, not according to their works,*
but

but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began. Then also, as Faith would not be the *gift* of God, nor the *operation* of his Holy Spirit, it must be the effect of a man's *own will* to begin it and the effort of a man's *own power* to carry it on; all which is an error so fundamental, and so boldly contrary to the whole plan and analogy of Redemption, that it cannot be reprobated in terms too severe, nor too much abhorred for its blasphemous opposition to the gracious office of God the Holy Ghost. The Apostle treats it accordingly, in Gal. i. 6—9.

Nor will it mend the matter to say, that, by the CO-OPERATION of the Divine Spirit, Faith is exercised in the soul; for, if the introduction or interference of a superior Power be at all necessary to the existence or

exercise of Faith, it must be granted either as a Gift or a Reward. If as a *Gift*, then the case stands upon grace only, and precisely amounts to our purpose, such a gift being out of the reach, and above the natural inclination of the unrenewed man. But if as a *Reward*, then it must first be proved, how a man can earn or deserve a favor, or be entitled to it by any *congruity*, before he has strength to labor for it, or will to desire it, or the true sense and knowledge of its value. The most advanced Christians complain most of the want of these powers in themselves; and surely *the dead in sin* have not more efficiency within them than these. The whole, therefore, comes to the same issue; *they that are in the flesh cannot please God*, and they that are *led by the Spirit of God*, they, and they only, *are the sons of God*.

§ 13. The more we carefully contemplate the errors, which have crept into or defiled the Church, the more we shall perceive, that they uniformly arise from an ignorance of the penetrating spirituality of the divine Law ; from a heart whole and unbroken by the application of that Law through the powerful operation of the Spirit of God ; from a perversion of the Gospel itself through inexperience of its efficacy in establishing pardon, peace, love of God, and dread of sin ; and, in conjunction with all this, a confident opinion, either in whole or in part, of Man's will, wisdom, and powers, in the great business of salvation. Persons, under these circumstances, are too often ready to impute, both for themselves and others, to their own thoughts, their own considerations, their own reflections, their own arguments, and
there

their own rational inquiries, the adoption of those principles and the profession of those effects, which, if right and true, can only be justly imputed to the sovereign act and good pleasure of God. Hence it follows, and it seems unavoidably to follow, from such a representation, that they must consider men as the primary agents or first movers in their own conversion, and that God only drew nigh unto them, because they had, previously, by the strength of their own minds, convinced by the force of truth in argument, or by rational and moral suasion, drawn nigh unto him.

§ 14. How different is the language of the Holy Ghost! The sons of God, even they who believe in his name, *are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. THAT which is born*

born of the flesh, is FLESH ; and THAT which is born of the Spirit, is SPIRIT. Marvel not (said Christ) that I said unto thee, *Ye must be born again.* The wind bloweth where it listeth [even the natural agent is not subject to human control], and thou hearest the sound thereof [its effects are felt and known], but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth : *so is EVERY ONE that is born of the Spirit.*—The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness ; but unto us which are saved it is the POWER o God. — Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit, which is of God ; that we might *know* the things that are *freely given* to us of God.—But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ; *neither can he know them, be-*
cause

*cause they are spiritually discerned.**

Many other passages of the like import might be quoted: And, indeed, the whole of Redemption proceeds upon this plan, which renders all the glory to the free, sovereign, and unmerited, Grace and Mercy of Jehovah in covenant, and imparts all the benefit to poor, lost, broken-hearted, man.

“ People may, indeed, by industry and natural abilities, make themselves masters of the external evidences of Christianity, and have much to say for and against different schemes and systems of sentiments; but all the while the heart remains untouched. — The first lesson in the school of Christ is to become *a little child*, sitting simply at his feet, that we may be made wise unto salvation.”†

* 1 Cor. ii. 11—16. † *Cardiph.* vol. i. p. 161.

§ 15. It may be asked; “ If then only the objects of mercy, called in Scripture *God’s Elect*, shall be finally saved; why are Ministers appointed, and wherefore are they directed to *go and teach all nations*, or to *go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature?* Why are injunctions to repent and believe the Gospel so often repeated, if men are not able to believe and repent of themselves, or by the exercise of those means and powers, which they either possess or may possess if they please?”

The first answer is; God hath appointed and commanded all this, and much more of the same kind, and therefore it must be RIGHT. We have no allowance, as creatures, to call into question the propriety of his rules and determinations; but we are to acknowledge, that, as his thoughts are far above our thoughts, the clear and

known decisions of the Lord respecting persons and things, though they may perplex our short and darkened understandings for the present, will ultimately be found wise, and just, and good, and perfect, exciting the praise and admiration of all intellectual beings.

§ 16. It may next be observed, that the decrees of God are known only to himself; but that their effects are generally plain and evident to us. There are no exceptions made in the call of his word. They, therefore, who presume to justify unbelief or disobedience by God's decrees, of which they know nothing, will one day find, that their own natural aversion to God's truth, and their innate love of sin, were the real motives of their own resistance, and, consequently, that the whole blame will rest with themselves. Men are not publicly called,

called, as *elected* persons; but as *guilty, perishing, sinners*. Nor can any man prove his election of God, but by his acceptance of pardon freely set before him in the Gospel; nor determine fairly about his reprobation but by the obstinate continuance of a proud and rebellious heart, in resisting, to the end of his life, the grace of the Holy Spirit, as proposed in the declarations of the word. If a man, therefore, shall venture to encourage himself in sin and unbelief, from the conceit of an outstanding decree of which he is entirely ignorant, he certainly does prove, that at present his heart is in a hardened state, that he lives in defiance of the just judgments of God clearly announced to all such, and that he is ready for himself to take the worst alternative of God's determination, which is a curse upon unrepented sin; and all this, only for

the poor gratifications of the pride or lust of his animal nature in this transitory and miserable world. Let him but deal fairly with his own conscience; and he will probably find, that these poor and melancholy motives are at the bottom of the whole. He has chosen for himself really, though perversely; nor can he fairly charge the Almighty with the just consequences of his own wish and his own way.

§ 17. If we take this matter in another point of view, we may safely say, after the Scriptures, that the Lord hath certainly a right to do with his own, as he pleases; and that, if he had left all to perish, instead of some, because of the sinfulness, *which he never placed*, but which is now *found*, through a far different channel, in the nature of all, he would have been an infinitely merciful and holy, as well as just,

just, Being, beyond the possibility of defect or impeachment. Yet there are those, who inconsiderately and daringly say, that, if the doctrine of election be true, the great Author of all good must also be the author of all sin, and that he made multitudes of beings, both angelic and human, only for the express purpose of damning them.—How grossly can man's corrupt reason pervert God's most serious and salutary truths! But let these people for a moment apply a case, which "comes home to their own business and bosoms." God hath been pleased, in his wise and just providence, to distinguish some amongst themselves with honours, rank, prosperity, and various endowments of mind and body, in many degrees above others. But do these complain of any excessive partiality or indulgence in the case? Do they be-
lieve,

lieve, that they themselves have particularly too much of any thing that is good ; that they have too much wisdom, learning, riches, honour, superiority, or happiness? Do they ever murmur against God, that other men are neither wise, nor rich, nor honourable, nor prosperous, nor healthy, nor powerful, nor happy, exactly as themselves? Do they ever reproach him for the poverty, or comparative misery and defect of others? and are they really dissatisfied, that all men are not perfectly equal, in all respects, with them? If this be so ; let them distribute largely of their own stock to their indigent neighbours, and raise up, as far as it will go, their wretched inferiors to a perfect equality of circumstances, and bring themselves down to the lowest level they can find. Let them never condemn any man for the weakness of his understanding ;

nor

nor congratulate themselves in the superior advantages of rank, or beauty, or strength ; nor triumph, with imperious insolence, over the inferiority of the poor and the helpless ; nor, till they have done all this, and much more which might be added, fairly and entirely to the utmost of their power, let them dare to complain of the unequal dispensations of God's Providence in the world. And if they may not dare to complain of these, which are of a lower order than those which relate to the kingdom of glory ; how can they presume to call the Most High to an account, because he was not pleased to make men or angels originally impeccable, and because, when men are sunk into a fallen state, and perversely seek nothing beyond it, he hath been pleased to exercise his sovereign mercy in saving a part of these criminals from a
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just execution, and to leave the rest, under the ban of his law, to all the consequences of the chosen error of their ways?—The Judge of the whole earth will do, and can do, nothing but what is right: and the wisest of men, under their own management, will in spiritual things say and do nothing but what is radically wrong.

A crowd of examples also might be brought forward from the Scriptures, which were evidently intended to prove, that man's selection by God is not according to nature or natural right and expectation, but entirely of grace. This, however, would almost require a treatise by itself. Whoever considers the history of *Abel, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, the Apostles*, and others, can be at no loss to discern, that, above mere nature, and sometimes contrary to it, they

they were the *called*, the *chosen*, and the *faithful*.

§ 18. But it may also be observed, that God, in the appointment of the ministers of his word, hath given them a *general commission* to preach to *all men*, wherever his Providence shall prepare the opportunities; because, for wise and obvious reasons, as well as from the nature of things in the world's fallen state, it would be improper, and therefore made impracticable, that any set of men should know *à priori* who were or who were not the special and particular persons, whom God hath chosen for himself. It is not given to the most gracious of men to foreknow and to point out the events or the parties under the divine determination, or, in better words, to *know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power*. It is enough for them parti-

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cularly to be assured of their own interest in the covenant of salvation. They are to go forth, in a faithful reliance upon the protection and blessing of Him who commissions them, and to preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus to all persons, at all times, and in all places, to which they are providentially directed or enabled. Their duty it is to preach, to testify, to exhort, with all long-suffering and patience, with the utmost diligence and faithfulness: but it rests with the Divine Mind to second the word preached with the effectual working of his power, and to confer the essential blessing.* And we may be persuaded, that

* *Sonus verborum nostrorum aures percutit: Magister intus est. Admonere possumus per strepitum vocis nostræ: si non sit intus qui doceat, inanis fit strepitus noster.*—INTERIOR MAGIS-

that wherever, in his Providence, he sends forth his messengers, he has an errand of peace to convey to some of his people. Never does he appoint a faithful shepherd, but to be the means in his hand to gather in the appointed sheep into his flock or his fold.

§ 19. He is pleased also to do this great work by the instrumentality of *men*, and sometimes of men not distinguished by eminence of situation or talents, that the glory may not be imputable to creatures, and that *the excellency of the power*, thus committed to *earthen vessels*, may appear, both in cause and effect, to be all his own. This appears to be the sense of the Church of England in her twenty-sixth article, in which she states, that the

TER *qui docet*, CHRISTUS *docet*, INSPIRATIO *ipsius docet*. Ubi illius INSPIRATIO, et illius UNCTIO, non est, forinsecus inaniter perstrepunt verba. — AUG. Conf. lib. i. c. 13.

efficacy of the word and sacraments does not depend entirely upon the administration of ministers, but that even evil men, performing divine offices, may be blessed to others, though not blessed in themselves. The most learned and successful of all the Apostles hath most fully expatiated upon this important truth, in many parts of his epistles to the Churches.

§ 20. As a matter of fact, it is also confirmed by various examples. To point out a few of them may suffice.

The first sermon after our Lord's ascension, when the Holy Ghost was poured forth from on high, was preached by St. Peter. We find in it no display of argument, no flourish of rhetoric, no affectation of language, manner, or method; but one plain and simple detail of facts, foretold
by

by ancient prophecies which are quoted, and followed up by an exhortation *to every one* present to repent and be baptized, with an assurance of the remission of sins and of the gift of the Holy Ghost, grounded upon the *Prophecy or Promise unto them and to their children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.* His exhortation was general, and even universal. There was no limitation prescribed, or intended to be prescribed, by *him*; because the publication of the Gospel was ordained by the Lord himself to go abroad *into all the world.* But the *success*, the particular *appropriation*, remained with God; and this is plainly signified by those remarkable words, which place no restriction but in his own hands;—*even as many as the Lord our God shall call.* Accordingly,

we

we find, that, out of the *multitude come together*, three thousand souls gladly received the word, and were baptized; and that, immediately afterwards, upon the farther preaching of the Gospel, THE LORD ADDED to the church daily such as should be saved. It is evident, that the Apostle, inspired as he was, knew not, when he was declaring the counsel of God, who would receive or who reject that counsel. Nor was it his office to know it; though it became the subsequent matter of his joy. His commission was faithfully and constantly to preach, to testify, and to exhort; and, when this was done, all was done, that could be done by him. The issue was with God, whose Holy Spirit selected *the heirs of salvation*, carried the word *with power* to their hearts, induced *repentance unto life*, renewed them in the spirit
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of their minds, translated them from the kingdom of darkness into his own ; instilled new affections, a new understanding, new hopes, into their souls ; made them new creatures, or a new creation, in Christ Jesus, and brought them (in a word) into the state of grace from the state of nature, and into union and fellowship with the Father and the Son, with power over sin, with love of holiness and truth, and all the other things and circumstances which accompany salvation. In short, the converts under that memorable sermon, as well as real converts under all subsequent sermons, were such as the same Apostle describes them to be in his first general epistle to the Church—*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*

Thus

Thus they are primarily chosen, then effectually called, and at length eternally consecrated, as vessels of mercy, for the heavenly Master's use, and for the glory of all the divine attributes and perfections.*

§ 21.

* I am not much charmed with a phrase, which I suppose to be modern, applied to the infinite and indescribable Being, who inhabiteth eternity, namely, "The *character* of God." — The word *character*, limited as it is in its sense, and frequently employed to describe men and beasts whether good or bad, appears too low and familiar, and therefore far less decent and reverential than the more solemn term *attributes*, heretofore used by divines to convey their humble sense of the unutterable perfections of the Most High. — If it be said, that the word *χαρακτῆρ*, *character*, is found in Hebr. i. 3, (which is there translated *express image*,) and applied to the Divine Nature; I would observe, that the term is found there indeed, but has a very different sense, and seems to be specially applied to the person

§ 21. St. *Paul* was enjoined to preach, and continued to preach, at
 K Corinth,

person of Christ, *as* the Messiah, Immanuel, or God-man, and not, as hath been often supposed, to his divine nature only, as the Son, or Second Person in the Godhead; because, in that view, there would be an *idem per idem*, and the Divinity would be the sensible representation or express image of the Divinity, which appears to be absurd and impossible. Nor does the term seem applicable to the whole undivided or undistinguished Trinity. At all events, the word *character*, in the common sense, appears to be rather improper and inappropriate respecting God, and cannot justify the vulgar usage of it in the manner above-mentioned. — Again: if we consider, that the human nature of Christ, filled with the divine, is said to be, in a stronger acceptation than *Adam's* originally was, *the image of the invisible God*; then the words, *character*, *sign*, *stamp*, or *express image of his Hypostasis*, must relate to *Jesus Christ*, as the visible declaration or manifestation of his own person in the Godhead, which could not otherwise have been understood

Corinth, for a year and six months,
by an express revelation, and for an
expressed

derstood as performing and communicating those special acts of grace and love for man's redemption, which, as a *witness* or party in the everlasting covenant, he had undertaken to perform. — If the latter part of the text be duly considered, this application, so far from appearing incoherent or strained, may possibly appear the most accordant and natural; for, the great *Immanuel*, or God-man, being the sensible *brightness of the glory*, and the perfect representation or impression in human flesh of his own divine hypostasis or person, which must otherwise have been invisible and unknown to those for whose sakes he came into the world, *upholds all things by the word of his power*, whether in grace or nature; and, when he had BY HIMSELF purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. That is; he carried up the human nature, which he had assumed, to the throne of glory, and exalted it in himself *far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world,*
but

expressed reason; *because* (said the Lord) *I have much people in that city.* But it was not revealed to the Apostle, before his preaching, who were the special people designated by the Lord. They were to be discovered by him only in the *effect* of his ministry, seconded and succeeded by the Holy Spirit, who had authorized and empowered him to preach generally to all who would hear him. Thus the showers, that saturate the fields and afford fertility to the corn, fall also upon wastes, and roads, and rocks, and seas, appearing, to us at least, in these instances to distil from the

but also in that which is to come. If the serious reader will compare the text, Hebr. i. 3, with Eph. i. 20—23, and Col. i. 14—19, he will probably perceive not only a beautiful harmony in those passages, but also a most invincible testimony of the Saviour's Divinity and Glory.

heavens in vain. The acts of God are ample, but his intentions are pointed and sure. His word, though widely diffused and much rejected, doth not return unto him void, but accomplishes, really, every purpose whereunto he sent it.

§ 22. In like manner, the same Apostle was directed to declare the Gospel in Macedonia. He only knew, that he was to perform his function, and accordingly went thither. On the sabbath day, he went to the προσευχη, or *place where prayer was wont to be made* in the environs of the city of *Philippi*, knowing nothing of Lydia, *whose heart the Lord opened*, and intended to open, under his preaching, and perhaps not surmising that, through the medium of an afflictive imprisonment afterwards to himself, he should be the means; through the divine influence, of releasing his jailor from
from

from the confinement of sin and Satan, and of bringing him among others into the liberty of the children of God. When these purposes were accomplished, the Apostle saw what was the object of his mission, and was *then* at liberty to depart and to perform his apostleship elsewhere.

§ 23. A circumstance, not very dissimilar, occurs in the 2d Book of Chronicles, xxx. 1—12. King Hezekiah, in the faith and fear of God, resolved to keep the Passover, according to the Law, unto JEHOVAH, the ALEHIM of *Israel*. The Passover was spiritually a commemoration of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which Believers receive thereby. This feast had been, for a long time, neglected or improperly performed. Letters were sent, therefore, by the authority of the King and his counselors, throughout all Israel and Judah, with

with a strong exhortation for this purpose. But the event was then, as to the preaching of God's truth it ever has been, that many *laughed the messengers to scorn, and mocked them*; while others *humbled themselves* in various districts; and, particularly in Judah, **THE HAND OF GOD WAS TO GIVE** *them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the Lord.* The message was general; but *they only obeyed* whose hearts were affected by the hand or power of God. Another proof this, that *the way of man is not in himself*, but that *the preparation of the human heart is entirely of the Lord.*

§ 24. Different in this respect of fore-knowledge was the preaching of our Lord from that of his Apostles and Ministers. He knew before-hand, who would believe, and who would reject or betray him. But still his
preaching,

preaching, for an example to those sent by him, was *open* and *general*. The effect, however, was still the same. *Many were called, but few* of these, though called by Christ himself, were *chosen*. His sheep, and his sheep only, ever truly heard his voice. He knew, he fore-knew, and he fore-appointed, them. In consequence of this, they ever did and do *follow him in the regeneration*; and he gives unto them, as the effect, an eternal and inexterminable life. Being their wise and able shepherd, he hath ever, by his good Spirit, sought for and *searched them out*. For an example of diligence to his followers, and for a proof of the value he has placed upon souls; with what kindness and toil did he proceed from the lake of Galilee to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, a long journey on foot of many miles, evidently for the one purpose of giving help and consolation

consolation to a poor widow, for whom perhaps nobody cared beside ! He knew Zaccheus upon the tree, and saw Nathaniel in the garden ; when both of them were unconscious of his intended mercy and favour, in revealing himself as the Saviour of their souls. All this, and many circumstances of a similar kind, proved him to be **THE LORD THE PREACHER**, who spake as never man spake ; and were intended, on the one hand, to show forth his glory as God over all, having sovereign power both in heaven and earth ; and, on the other, to be a pattern, so far as the weakness of human nature can copy the divine, of patience, diligence, faithfulness, and wisdom, in the subordinate ministrations of his word.

§ 25. And here it may not be amiss to observe, that several of these, who were particularly marked by

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Christ as objects of his mercy, and who afterwards in consequence called upon him for help and blessing, received in the beginning only a faint glimpse or knowledge of his person and glory ; though in process of time, and according to the degree effected by the Holy Spirit, their faith, their knowledge, their confidence, were elevated, as trials and occasions were permitted, to such a fervent assurance of eternal life through their Redeemer, and to such a fearless contempt of what men or devils could do against them, as proved to a demonstration, by whose omnipotent hand they had been led, and by whom supported. These are examples of encouragement to those, who are pressing sincerely towards the kingdom of God ; though, for the present, they may not know much doctrinally concerning it. Experimental acquaintance with divine

truth is not always attended by much theoretical knowledge, and especially in persons newly awakened to seek the true interest of their souls. It is happy when both are united ; but I have seen people, who could not talk much about Christ, nor enter into the perplexities of argument for his truths, who yet evidently loved his person and enjoyed his mercy in a manner very superior to some, who could plead at great length, and dispute for them with precision and ability. Let my unlettered reader therefore rejoice, if in ardent faith and love he is enabled to cleave to his Lord, and to say from his inmost desires, with the Martyr of old, “ None but Christ, None but Christ.” Verily, he shall never be disappointed of his hope at the last ; and, in the mean time, let him sit at *Wisdom’s gate* ; let him hear, and pray, and use the appointed means ;
and

and then he may expect, that all necessary knowledge, as well as increase of faith and peace, shall be granted to him, according to the promise and purpose of his Redeemer.

§ 26. It may not be out of our way also to notice here, how frequently it has been urged, that, though the Church of England is in point of doctrine (what is called) strictly Calvinistic; there are several passages, and particularly in the Liturgy, which favor the scheme of *Universal Redemption*; and thence it is argued, that the Church either contradicts itself, or means to leave the point doubtful and undecided.

With all deference, I presume to think, that one plain distinction will relieve the Church from this censure of unbecoming indecision or inconsistency.

The Liturgy states, that Christ died for the sins of the *whole world*—for *all mankind*—for *every one*. But it also states, that only the *elect* people of God shall be saved—that these *few* are a *little flock*—and that the rest of the world, the bulk of mankind, are lost. This is her undeniable sense; and in this she follows the Scriptures.

That Christ died for all men *objectively*, as the *only object* of faith and hope to be set before *all men*, the *whole world*, *every creature* of mankind, is and must be readily granted. There is no name given under heaven, whereby men can be saved, but the name only of our Lord Jesus Christ. His *name* only therefore is to be preached to *all the world* for this end: and we may add, that, if there were ten thousand worlds of sinful men, the merit of his atonement is of such infinite sufficiency, as would propiti-

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ate for them all, if actually received by or mercifully extended to them.

But it must be admitted also, that Christ died *effectively* for those only, who are *actually* and *finally* saved, through the merit of his cross and passion. For, as it would involve a strange and unscriptural solecism to say, that Christ *is* really and intentionally the Saviour of those, who are not or never *will be* saved; so it is a precious truth, that none of those, whom he hath purchased with his own blood, ever were or shall be lost.

This distinction may be farther illustrated by that eminent type of the Redeemer under the Law, the Brazen Serpent. This was hung up and exposed to *general* view, and was instituted as an *Object of Faith*, denoting Christ bearing Sin and the Curse, to *all* the Camp of Israel without exception; and the direction to view it
for

for remedy was sent generally and without exception to all. But it was of *actual* benefit to none but those, who felt the rankling poison in their bodies threatening death, and who, accepting the *general proclamation* and *promise*, looked up believingly to the Cross, (for such it is believed to have been,) or Pole, on which the Serpent hung. These persons, therefore, lived by looking and believing: to all the rest, though equally set before them all, the emblem was merely an outward sign, which indeed might be examined and descanted upon with the nicest accuracy, but, without faith in the divine promise, imparted no real comfort or advantage to body or mind.

In like manner, Christ may be said to be a *universal* object of faith, as proposed universally to all men; but the *efficacious* object to those only, who

who have been led by the Divine Spirit to feel *the plague of their own hearts*, the curse and bitterness of sin, their ruinous alienation from the life of God, and to seek relief *through the blood of the cross*.

If all men trusted in Christ, (and there is no *exclusion in the proclamation* of the Gospel of any ; for, this is not made, we before observed, to sinners *as elected*, but to sinners *as perishing* ;) doubtless, all would be saved ; but, as none perhaps will venture to affirm, that *all men will be saved*, in contradiction to Christ himself, who says, that *strait is the gate and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it* ; it will therefore follow, that those only can be saved, who do actually *look unto Jesus*, and believe truly in him. And this they are only enabled to accomplish, as God's own testimony assures

assures us, by the gracious *gift* and special *operation* of the Holy Ghost.

I humbly think, then, that this distinction above-mentioned may be justified by the whole tenor of the Scriptures and by the analogy of faith, which was well understood by the Compilers of our Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies, and is more or less so by every other Christian, who has learned *the truth as it is in Jesus*.

Let my reader also remember, that God's church (which receives its name from being *called* or taken out of the world) is, as to object and appointment, designated both numerally and formally, not by an irregular figure, but by a perfect mathematical *square*; that it is, emblematically, a *garden*, not a *common*; that it is represented to us under the idea of an *inclosed, guarded, cultivated, field of inheritance*, not a wild, unappropriated, waste,

waste, for which nobody cares, and which produces nothing but indigenous weeds of little use or consequence. Let him duly consider these things, and apply them.

§ 27. Again ; with respect to the question, “ Why are injunctions and motives to repent and believe the Gospel so often repeated, if men are not able to believe and repent of themselves, or by the exercise of those means and powers, which they either possess or may possess if they please ? ” —it may farther be observed, and cannot be too often repeated ; That, though the command appears to be *general*, and as such is to be published generally by the ministers of Christ ; yet there is a *particular* and *special* direction by the Holy Spirit, conveying it effectually to the heirs of salvation, who are only previously known to himself. The Spirit of God acts

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upon

upon the soul, *with* the word, *by* the word, and *after* the word. When the word goes forth with power, it is because he is in it. When he is not in the ministry of the word, the word of itself, as daily experience shows, effects nothing to subdue the soul, or to bring it to God. We must never lose sight of the Covenant or Constitution of Grace, if we would escape error upon this great question. We do not stand now with God as in our original state. This is lost; and the condition of human nature is changed. *In Adam*, in the present fallen condition of man, *all die*, and, remaining there, must die for ever. *In Christ*, in the new covenant or constitution of mercy, *all* interested in it *shall be made alive*, and live with and by Christ eternally. And in this covenant all things and all objects are perfectly *ordered and sure*; and, though

though men cannot know many particulars in it, till they are opened by the manifestation of God in their appointed times, it must be granted, that *known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.* Out of the multitude from age to age he discerns and selects his own. To these he gives by his Spirit the privilege or the power to become the sons of God. To them his word of truth goes forth with peculiar energy and effect. To each of these belong particularly that address from our Lord—*he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* All others appearing to have the outward faculty, without this imparted life from the spiritual death of sin, have indeed outward ears to hear, but hear not within; have natural eyes to see, but see not the things of God; neither do they understand the word of Christ, nor obey his voice, howe-

ver uttered or set before them. The Scriptures are, and ever were, a *parable*, ill understood at any time, and not understood at all by men, however wise and learned in other respects, who are not *taught of God*. It is the great office of the Holy Spirit to prepare the mind, to enlighten it, to inculcate upon it his own truth, and to fix and preserve it firmly to the end. And it is almost as ridiculous, as it is false, to imagine, that Heathen Philosophers, and especially Heathen Poets, however dignified by the name of classical, should enable a man to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God ; when it is well known, that many of them never so much as heard of this divine revelation ; and that those, who had some slight information of the subject, despised it like our modern infidels, and much for the same reasons. It is by grace, therefore, that the word of the

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Most High doth not *return unto him void*, but accomplishes all the purpose for which he sent it, which certainly could not be the case, if its success depended upon the will and strength of man, instead of the effectual agency of God the Spirit. The Apostle sums up the matter in a few words : *we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish : to the one we are the savour of death unto death ; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things ? So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.** Thus, also, it again appears, that *many*, indeed, *are called ; but few chosen*.

§ 28. “ But is it not said ; *Let him that heareth say, Come. And*

* 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16 ; with Rom. ix. 16.

let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever WILL, let him take the water of life freely. And is not this the true notion of free Grace, that Grace is free for all men ?”

Doubtless it is so said, in this and many similar passages ; and doubtless also whosoever *heareth*, and is *athirst*, or is *willing*, may freely come, and be happily welcome. But all these terms obviously imply *life*, and *renovated life from the dead* ; because no man *can hear*, unless he is *quicken*ed through Christ from the death of trespasses and sins ; no man *can thirst* for God, or the things of God, but he, who hath the mind and spirit of Christ, which no natural man has, or, while such, can have ; no man is *willing* to come to a crucified Saviour, and be crucified himself in the old man with his affections and lusts, but he,

he, *who hath been made willing in the day of God's power.* The Lord first gives this good will, and afterwards works with it and in it, when he hath given it, that it may abound in every good word and work; not to the pride of the flesh, not to the setting aside or obscuring the glory of the Redeemer in his work of grace, but to his own honour and praise in the free salvation of the otherwise helpless and ruined sinner.* *Him that cometh to me (said Christ) I will in no*

* So Bishop Beveridge: "It is God who *first* enables us to will what we ought to do, and *then* to do what we will. Both the grace we desire and our desire of grace, proceed from him. — And therefore certainly without him, we can neither *prepare* ourselves for conversion, nor convert ourselves after preparation; unless we can prepare ourselves without having a good will, or convert ourselves without acting of it."—On Art. ix.

wise cast out; but this declaration is preceded by those memorable words — *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me*—and followed up by words no less memorable — *No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him*. He has in himself neither will nor power. It is not only; “He cannot, because he will not:” But (if Christ himself may be believed) he will not, because he cannot. The converse of these two propositions is equally and mutually true. The *will* is a leading principle or primary species of power; and the natural man hath no mind, no will, no strength, to *begin* the act of turning himself truly to God. His carnal mind, his natural heart, his corrupt will, are all at *enmity* in the abstract against God, and, without the grace of the new creation in Christ, will remain utterly irreconcilable to him.

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This implies a fair answer to those, who object, that, as men are called by the Gospel to believe in Christ for eternal life, with an assurance that he loved them and died for them, they are called to believe what is not true, or what cannot be true upon the plan of previous election, which includes some, and passes by the rest of mankind.

The call, indeed, by ministers, and their commission from the Gospel, are general. But the efficient cause, in the mean time, is with God, and influences, in this case as confessedly throughout all nature, according to his mind and will, respecting each particular. No promise of good whatever is made to an *unbeliever*, as such. *He that believeth, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned.* The blessing rests with the acceptance of God's promise,

and is inseparable from it. An unbeliever cares for none of these things, and wilfully rejects them. Besides, it is no where said, that Christ loved and died for those, who finally oppose his truth and perish. *He laid down his life for HIS SHEEP.* The rest *believe not*, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT OF HIS SHEEP. And the following text gives a direct answer to the whole quibbling plea of the Pelagians and others, who contend for the universality of a redemption, which, after all, is confessed by themselves to be unattended with universality of salvation. *My Sheep hear my voice* (i. e. they only), *and I know them* (i. e. I have selected and claimed them for my own); *and they follow me* (i. e. in faith and in righteousness), *and I GIVE unto them eternal life* (i. e. a grace and blessing, which cannot be earned or deserved); *and they shall never*
perish

perish (because I am JEHOVAH, their almighty Shepherd), *neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.*

Excellent are the words of an able divine upon this subject, which I submit to the reader. “ It may be said, “ If faith was the native effect of “ free-will, it would indeed be the “ man’s fault: but it is the gift of “ God; and how can the man be “ damned for God’s withholding his “ Gift? — The proper answer to so “ bold a charge would be what the “ Apostle gives in a case near of kin “ to this; *Who art thou, O man, who “ repliest against God?* The strength “ of the answer lies in the question, “ *Who art thou, O man?* and one “ may say, with great assurance, that “ no man, that knows himself, will “ ever talk in that manner. He will “ feel in himself, his conscience will “ tell him, that he has treated the

“ astonishing grace of God, manifest-
 “ ed in his son Jesus Christ, in such
 “ an unworthy manner, that it is per-
 “ fectly consistent with the most
 “ boundless riches of grace to shut
 “ him out for ever from any part or
 “ share in it, and that nothing but
 “ sovereign grace can prevent his e-
 “ ternal destruction. And this con-
 “ viction will be yet stronger, if he
 “ knows indeed the state and temper
 “ of his own heart, what it is that
 “ moves him to make such an objec-
 “ tion, as it argues a heart not at all
 “ reconciled to the grace of God, and
 “ his way of bestowing life in the
 “ new creation. He cannot think of
 “ living by grace, but will be at doing
 “ something to make the purchase.
 “ He will not receive it on God’s
 “ terms, and so stand altogether in-
 “ debted to Christ ; which is as much
 “ as to say, that he will not have it

“ at

“ at all. The man that is content to
 “ be nothing, to deny himself, and
 “ follow Christ, will find the way
 “ open to a throne of grace, where
 “ he can never be at a loss for either
 “ mercy or grace. And he, that will
 “ not go there to have it, complains
 “ injuriously, and without any cause,
 “ if he goes without it.”*

§ 29. Farther; the dead are also
commanded to live and to do certain
 acts of life; as in the instance of the
 dry bones in Ezekiel, of the widow's
 son at Nain, and of Lazarus; but, if
 a divine and effective power had not
 internally attended the divine external
 command; the voice of the prophet
 in the one case, and of Christ himself
 in the others, would have been only
 a trifling vibration of the air. But an
 energetic faculty being imparted to the

* RICCALTOUN'S Diss. on Gal. ii. 20.

objects, at the moment of giving forth the authoritative direction ; an instant obedience by the creature was the immediate result. Men, in like manner, are to be exhorted every where to believe and repent ; and it is the office of ministers, in season and out of season, to inculcate, and, as much as in them lies, to impress their exhortations ; but Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and all the ministers upon earth, or all the angels in heaven, could no more impart spiritual life by their own act to any one soul, than by their united efforts they could do that inferior thing — create or give life to a fly. The new creation, as well as the old, is altogether the workmanship of God. When he speaks through his instruments, it is done. All things are obedient to the voice of his word ; that is, to his Spirit speaking in and by the word. The ministers might therefore
 preach,

preach, and exhort, and testify, as
 their office requires, or, in the
 words of Scripture, *plant and water* ;
 but the whole would be in vain, unless
 God, according to his promised bles-
 sing, gave the increase. *So then nei-
 ther is he that planteth, nor he that
 watereth, any thing* (and how much
 less the object planted and watered !)
*but God, who giveth the increase, and
 who worketh all in all, according to
 the counsel of his own will.* “ It is
 true (says the excellent Archbishop
 LEIGHTON) God requires faith ; salva-
 tion is through faith ; but he that re-
 quires *that*, gives it too. — It is won-
 derful grace to save upon believing.
 Believe in Jesus for salvation, and live
 accordingly ; and it is done. There is
 no more required to thy pardon, but
 that thou receive it by faith. But
 truly *Nature* cannot do this. It is
 as impossible for us, of ourselves, to
 believe,

believe, as to do. This then is that which makes it all *Grace* from beginning to end, that God not only saves upon believing, but *gives* believing itself." *Com.* on 1 Peter, c. i. v. 10.

He farther observes; "To give a *right assent* to the Gospel of Christ is *impossible*, without divine and saving faith infused in the soul." And

it may here be observed by the way, that, when a worldly man, knowing nothing truly of this faith, sets himself to correct the sin or unbelief, which he perceives in the conduct of others, he is in the case of the person, whom our Lord censures with having the beam in his own eye, while inveighing against the mote in the eye of another. The mote is indeed a mote, and gives injury to the sight; but that beam, that great mass, which is within himself, of corrupted faithless nature, unpardoned and unmortified,

fied, he doth not feel nor understand. He can only see the external defects of others. He knows not how to appreciate the plague of his own heart, nor the deep fountain of sin within. He, therefore, acts the part of the hypocrite, in loving to detect failings or offences in others ; but is cold and superficial in his investigations of the far greater and more serious mischiefs, brooding within himself. The *outside* of the cup and the platter engrosses his whole attention. This indeed should be clean and carefully kept clean ; but the *inside*, which contains the food, and which is the chief purpose of the vessel, should be most of all purified and observed. But this a Pharisee, or a man of the world, cannot well comprehend. He is ever looking at outward things, because he himself is *outward* ; a something in name ;

name ; a nothing in reality. Rom. ii. 28, 29.

§ 30. We may bring people under the means of grace, or they may walk to places appointed for public worship ; they may attend family prayer, and they may use the words of sound prayer for themselves : And all this is right and proper. It were to be wished, that more of this were to be seen in congregations, in families, and in private life ; and the neglect of these duties, for duties they are, is one of the circumstances in the present day, which cannot be too much censured or deplored. But the question, the important question, of grace and spiritual life, does not turn upon the exercise of corporal powers, which any one may perform ; but upon those spiritual acts of spiritual life, which, if we follow the oracles of truth, none can perform but by the omnipotent energy

energy of the Holy Spirit, who first renovates the soul in Christ, and then produces those inward and in consequence those precious effects of regeneration, which are the indispensable proofs of its being. It is not a question of nature, but of grace above nature. Its turning point is ; whether there be such a thing as inward and spiritual life, and whether that life be raised in the soul by the exertion of its own natural powers and faculties, or strictly and entirely infused by the free bestowment of the Holy Spirit. Is it GOD, or is it MAN, who *begins* the work? Does the soul first incline to Christ by any created means whatever, and so the Spirit of God only answers the desires of the soul ; or does the Holy Spirit induce, in the first instance, every right view and inclination, and then the soul in consequence

quence *cleaves with full purpose* to the Lord ?

In the one case, salvation would depend upon the will and power of man, and so would be of works : in the other, the blessing flows from mere mercy and grace, granted solely according to the pleasure of God. If the former were true, man would have a right justly whereof to glory ; but, if the latter must stand, as indeed it must for ever, then he that glorieth must glory in the Lord, in whose presence *no flesh*, or whatever belongs to it, shall dare to glory.

§ 31. It is from sad inexperience of this matter, when preachers or writers aim to lead men, in the *first* instance, to duties and works, to their own powers and fleshly energies, instead of stating, with all possible force and clearness from the Law of God, their fallen, vile, ruined, and helpless, condition.

dition. Till people know and feel the *want* of a Saviour, they can never understand his *worth*. The sick only need a physician. And, therefore, the first business is, in submission to the Divine Blessing, to show to traitor-man, not only his acts of rebellion, but his rebellious, traitorous, deceitful, and deceived, heart in every thing respecting God: That he cannot make himself good for acceptance, but must come to Christ, as a wretched self-hopeless sinner, ready to perish, and deserving to perish: That he must plead only for mercy according to the promises of mercy: That he can bring no recommendation but his sin and misery; and that his simple and only trust must be, and ever continue to be, in the free, free grace of the Redeemer, who saves every sinner, convinced and repentant through the power of his Spirit, from everlasting death

death through faith in his blood. On the other hand, to set men upon working and upon duties, before or without this previous preparation of the soul for these which are the fruits of faith, is to lead them on to acts of self-righteousness, hardness of heart, conceited presumptions, the ignorance of pride, and that *confidence in the flesh*, which the Apostle, once a Pharisee and full of all these, found it his privilege, through mercy, both to understand and abhor. *Thou hast found the life of thine hand* (says the prophet); THEREFORE, *thou wast not grieved*. Is. lvii. 10. Men do not cease to *live according to the flesh*, till they begin to *live by the faith of the Son of God*.

“ Faith (said an excellent Christian) is a distinct grace, wrought freely by the Holy Spirit, quickening the heart to assent to and rest upon the word of God,

God, *upon the account of the Truth of God who spoke it.* It is *distinct*, as seeing and hearing are distinct from the other senses. It is *wrought freely by the Spirit*, and so no *acquired notion*. It *quicken*s, through conveying life from Christ to the heart, by *divine appointment*. It *assents to and rests upon the word*, against the contradiction of flesh and blood. It *eyes the Truth of God*, as the fountain of its satisfaction and success. And so it first unites the heart to Christ, and gives actual interest and property in him, and in the covenant which God made with him before the world was, and consequently in all the blessings contained in the covenant.”*

* DORNEY'S *Contempl.* p. 188. Edit. 3. This truly experimental book was edited, the third time, by the late Rev. W. Talbot of Reading, with a recommendatory preface by the late Rev. W. Romaine.

§ 32. The work, then, we must conclude, is of God: And the gracious effects, foreign as they are to the sinful nature of fallen man, will prove their cause.

§ 33. One great, if not first, effect of grace in the soul, is FAITH.* By faith, however, is to be understood, not that flimsy, superficial, unaffected, notion, or assent to things revealed, or concerning God himself, which springs from sense, or rational evidence *only* set before the mind; but that holy principle of spiritual life, which is attended with the deepest convictions of sin and human depravity, of

* Vita nostra (h. e. spiritualis) à fide sumit initium, *quia justus ex fide vivit*, quæ per Spiritum Sanctum datur. Totum Deo adimitur, si et *initium et consummatio fidei nostræ humani arbitrii viribus applicatur.* FULG. *apud Cons. Patr.* p. 153.

deserved ruin and utter inability to obtain relief from all created help ; which brings the sinner to receive and rest upon the word of God implicitly and only ; which prostrates the spirit of a man into contrition and humiliation, into the very dust (as it were) of self-
 abhorrence and renunciation ; which leads him, in this lowly frame, to the foot of the cross, as a cursed and egregious sinner, crying for mercy and forgiveness through the blood of Him, who hung upon it ;* which, when the soul is comforted and strengthened by

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* Pious is the following apostrophe to Christ, composed by the devout *Bernard*, which an excellent German Minister, *Lucas Pollio*, desired to have repeated to him at his death, which occurred in 1583 :

*Ne, quæso, more judicis,
 Quid egerim, quid dixerim,*

Quid

the promises, brings it yet nearer and nearer to Christ and to his divine fullness, for wisdom, power, holiness, and every thing else, which may promote life and nearness to him, or enable it to adorn the doctrine of the Saviour ; which cannot suffer a man to endure the thought of imputing his own salvation to his own strength or worthiness, or of obtaining any glory for himself in the course or practice of ho-

Quid cogitârim, pondera :
Peccata sed mea omnia
Tuo cruore deleas.

The sense of which may be thus translated :

Lord, as a judge upon thy seat,
 O let me not thy presence meet ;
 Nor in strict balance e'er be weigh'd
 What I have thought, or done, or said :
 But blot out ev'ry stain of guilt
 By blood divine for sinners spilt !

liness ;

liness; but is jealous, that the whole praise should redound to the Lord alone, for all done in him, or for him, or by him, from beginning to end. In short; "Faith is (as the gracious divine above cited notes) an humble, self-denying, grace, which makes the Christian nothing in himself, but all in God."* This is a general outline of the Faith of God's elect, given and wrought upon their souls by the operation and grace of God's Holy Spirit. And as this faith is of God, so it uniformly tends to him, as the needle to the pole, and can be satisfied with nothing but what is of God, or what leads to him, either in the great business of salvation or in the course of events passing in the world. By faith, the Christian understands,

* LEIGHTON'S *Com. on 1 Pet. c. i. v. 5.*

that the whole world itself is but **A SYSTEM OF MEANS**, leading to a sublime and eternal consummation ; that the production of souls for glory is one great branch of that system ; and that, therefore, every thing shall work together for good to the redeemed, as an essential part of one vast whole, which will finally redound to the magnificent display of God in all his attributes and perfections.—Much more might be observed of the tendencies and influences of faith in the heart and life of the Christian ; but this short sketch may, at present, suffice to show, that in consideration of its nature and activity, in such a world as our's, and in the degraded state of man, it is and must be, in the beginning, middle, and end, entirely from God. For it has been truly enough said, that “ No one ever did, or ever will, feel himself and own himself

himself

himself to be a lost, miserable, and hateful, sinner, unless he be *powerfully and supernaturally convinced by the Spirit of God:*”* And so says the Scripture; or rather our Lord in the Scripture: *A man can RECEIVE nothing, and consequently can produce nothing, except it be given him from above.* All is, radically, ungodliness, which does not proceed from God: And all is impious infidelity, which does not lead to him through the Mediator Jesus Christ.

§ 34. By the influence of the Holy One, Faith grows into or brings forth the fruit of HOPE. Without faith, there could be no hope; for hope itself may be considered as the gracious principle of faith, raised or extended towards its object. This hope is nourished, as faith itself, by

* *Cardiph.* vol. i. p. 167.

the Lord alone in the use of his word. He is, therefore, called *the God of Hope*. Now (says the Apostle) *the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost*. Not more than faith itself, therefore, is it the subject of human power, but a gracious influence from on high, which tends to raise up and invigorate the soul, till it come to the *full assurance of hope*, as well as of *faith and understanding, to the end*. And (as a most eminent and experimental divine hath observed) if this be true, “it is a foolish, mis-grounded, fear, and such as argues *in-experience of the nature and workings of divine grace*, to imagine, that the *assured hope* of salvation will beget unholiness and presumptuous boldness in sin, and therefore that the doctrine of that assurance is a doctrine of licentiousness.

centiousness. Our Apostle is not so sharp-sighted as these men think themselves: he apprehends no such matter; but, indeed, supposes the contrary as unquestionable: he takes not assured Hope and Holiness as enemies, but joins them as nearest friends—*hope perfectly, and be holy.* Abp. LEIGHTON'S *Com. on 1 Peter*, c. i. v. 14.

§ 35. CHARITY, or that sublime and delightful grace of LOVE, which attaches the soul to Christ, and to all that belongs to him, and which expands itself into universal benevolence in submission to the divine will; this grace also is the genuine offspring of faith, and, like it, receives all its being and increase from the Holy One of God. The sweet and benign impressions of this holy principle, in bearing, believing, hoping, and enduring, all things, are so strongly pointed out by
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an Apostle, that it is not necessary to say more of it here, than to observe, that, when faith and hope shall be consummated in fruition, this consociate grace shall remain and shine forth, with full perfection, in the regions of glory. *Love is of God*, as well as faith and hope, and, with them, leads up the soul to similarity and communion with him. But how can *the love of the Spirit*, of which the Scriptures so frequently speak, exist or be exercised without *the grace of the Spirit*? The *flesh*, in this sublime case, surely *profiteth nothing*.

§ 36. In the participation of the preceding graces, leading the soul to God in Christ and to fellowship with him, Joy proportionally springs up and flourishes, and grows. There could be no truly Christian joy, but in the exercise of these concomitant graces. It is a peace given with them,
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But never alone. It is also a peace supported by the Holy Spirit above the world, and therefore cannot be taken away by it. This was tried in the case of Paul and Silas at Philippi; and it has been tried in innumerable instances both before and since that memorable occasion. The Bible and our ecclesiastical histories are full of the most lively proofs, that, as this peace surpasses the natural man's understanding, so it is not the result of his or any created power, but of the power and favour of Him, whose kingdom only ruleth over all.

§ 37. To mention one point more: *The serving God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life, is the sole effect of redeeming love, and inseparably connected with faith, hope, love, and joy, in the Holy Ghost. If we have these graces through Christ, we*

shall strive to commune ever with him, and to copy his example; and we shall and must be unhappy, when we decline, whatever be the degree, from his holy fellowship and likeness. The way of holiness is the King of Heaven's high way of peace and truth; and his people can have no higher delight than to walk therein. The paths of the world and the flesh are gloomy and thorny, and full of dangers and distress; but this way of God's children, far unlike "the hard way of transgressors," is a path of purity, in which he walks both with them and in them, and thereby demonstrates himself, often very sensibly in their affections and activities, to be their God and Father, and themselves to be his reconciled and justified children through his adoption and grace. The natural man, on the contrary, follows his natural reason, and delights in it
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and can endure no instruction, not even what is ordained of God, which is not derived from or leads to it. He always prefers his own candle to the sun. But the spiritual man, using, as other men, his natural reason for the natural or sensible objects proper for it, desires a light for his mind, not faint or uncertain like his own glimmering spark, but strong and sure, as God himself; that he may apprehend firmly, whatever is of such deep importance to him as concerns his own happiness, and that he may know most effectually how it shall be with him, after this transient abode upon earth, for innumerable millions of ages to come. Of all this he can know and apprehend nothing really and comfortably, but through that *Spirit which searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*. When we consider, then, all these truths, stated

as they are in the Scriptures, and confirmed by experience from age to age, we may fairly ask; who hath carried up, or who could carry up, the soul to such heights, to such solid expectations, to such “calm sun-shine,” and such “heart-felt joy,” to such invincible faith and unfeigned holiness in life and death, as have been so long and so often exemplified; but that divine Agent, who hath promised it all, and who, in beginning the good work, did thereby give an assurance, that he himself would carry it on and perfect it to the end? What Bishop *Berkeley* once said of the natural world, and the various operations of Providence transacting upon it, is equally true at least of the spiritual world, and the effects of the Divine Spirit exhibited in it from age to age; that “we cannot make even one single step in accounting for the phænomena, without admitting

mitting the immediate presence and immediate action of an INCORPOREAL AGENT, who *connects, moves, and disposes*, all things, according to such rules and for such purposes *as seem good to him.*”*

§ 38. It may be noticed here, that, though the faith of God’s people, under the Christian dispensation, is, as such, a pure principle solely derived from the Holy Spirit; yet that certainly the faith of the antients, having less of evidence in the actual coming of the Messiah, was more strictly devoid of sense, and upon that account (as one says) eminently “bold and noble;” because these, “upon obscure prophecies and mystical types, raised their belief, and expected apparent impossibilities.” But the power of God made that belief easy, firm,

* *Siris.* § 237.

and practicable, which to man, with nothing but the force of his own reason and abilities, would for ever have been absolutely unattainable. It is almost unnecessary to instance the cases of Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, and others, in the various occurrences of their lives.

§ 39. By way of contrast to this luminous work of God, let us, for a moment, bring forward that dark shade of the free-will and working of man ; and we shall find it as cold and dismal as it is gloomy, and totally unfit to impart what is needful to us in the present fallen situation of our souls. For, if *Faith*, as some have asserted, originate from human reason, or be nothing more than a “ peculiar exercise of reason ;” then it depends upon rational motives or arguments, or upon that simple force, which truth, or perhaps verisimilitude only, may carry
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as a naked proposition to the mind. Not to dwell upon the total repugnancy of this tenet to the Scripture, which proves by numerous facts as well as descriptions, that the faith of real believers is the sole gift of God and the special operation of his Spirit; the consequences, which attend the principle, clearly demonstrate its fallacy or falsehood. For, if Faith stood in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God; if, by argument or the deductions of reason, it received its birth, its growth, its establishment; by human wisdom or by crafty argument, and especially in minds not very able to meet difficult or involved discussions, such a faith might be easily and therefore often overthrown. God's poor and unlearned people, and such is the great bulk of them, would be in a terrible plight in a circumstance of this kind. But, most happily,

pily, the fact is, *God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world; and, by the foolishness of preaching, he is pleased to save them that believe.* To these, most truly, Christ is the *power of God, and the wisdom of God.* — Moreover, the things of God are spoken with most real advantage (as gold requires no gilding), *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; for, after all, the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are, not naturally, but SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED.* *He must be born again; he must be renewed in the spirit of his mind; he must become a spiritual man; before he can truly understand or receive faithfully spiritual things.* Thus, the proud reason of an unconverted heart is deeply humbled in this business

business of grace, and is not allowed, being *fleshly* and *corrupt*, to comprehend, and much less to glory in, the things, which lead to the presence of God.

§ 40. Again. If faith stood upon human reason, or derived all its energies, acts, and conclusions, from human reason, it would be subject to perpetual doubts, which imply a condition directly opposite to its own nature. For, “Faith (as Archbishop *Leighton* hath justly observed) elevates the soul, not only above sense and sensible things, but *above reason itself*. As reason corrects the errors that sense might occasion, so supernatural faith corrects the errors of natural reason, judging according to *sense*.”* Faith leads the mind, in its

* *Com. on 1 Peter, c. i. v. 8, 9.*

very nature and tendency, to *certitude*, and to gain an *establishment* in God's truth beyond all contradiction; but reason must be in perpetual controversy upon objects, which are not subject to *sensation*, as spiritual things confessedly are not, and can do nothing but doubt and dispute upon them, as it hath always done from age to age. Hence, the world is full of religious controversies, and upon this ground cannot be otherwise. We do not reason at all, but upon topics of uncertainty; and therefore we must necessarily admit, that the word of God is not so *sure a foundation* as it is, when we begin to build our doubts upon it. But, since God has revealed his truth; where he gives the grace of faith to understand and rest upon it, all doubt, and consequently all carnal *reasonings*, should be *cast down*,* or done away;

* 2 Cor. x. 5.

as being opposed to that truth, which cannot be mixed with error; and injurious to that faith, which is granted for the most firm and implicit reliance upon it.* Every believer's experience

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* In this case, above all others, "nature," saith the learned Dr. Cudworth, "is not master of art or wisdom: nature is *ratio mersa et confusa*, reason immersed and plunged into matter, and as it were fuddled in and confounded with it." *Siris*. § 255. If reason be weak and incompetent in its energies upon natural things, how much more incapable must it be respecting a just determination upon objects spiritual and sublime, such as are all the things of God? "Reason also (says another author) is as much a rebel to Faith, as Passion is to Reason." Besides, the course of reason, proceeding from reflections, which, as they arise from the wavering weakness and misapprehension of the human mind, are both uncertain and disunited, must needs be unsafe and unsure, in holy things especially. Whereas faith, grounded in its principle upon the sole truth

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will tell him, that, when reasonings prevail, distrust, perplexity, weakness of heart, and perhaps unholiness of heart and of life, are struggling most within him; and that he never enjoys a happy fellowship with his Saviour, or light and life from the Holy Spirit, or is deeply sensible of the love of the Father towards him, or obtains victory over sin, the world, and all that is contrary to God, but when he lives most clearly by the faith of the Son of God, and can cast all his welfare with the most entire recumbence upon him. A merely rational professor has nothing to work with but his own fallen nature, and nothing to work for but the pride and self-

and power of God, cannot be mistaken, unless God is. So far then is faith from superstitious fanaticism, that it is the very death of all reveries and fancies in matters of religion.

righteousness

righteousness of his own deceived heart, which is constantly ready to turn him aside.

§ 41. When faith is low, *Hope* must sink in proportion. And that sort of faith, which is only another name for reason, can bear no fruit beyond its own proper nature. If that faith, then, be founded in doubt or uncertainty, or depends upon the inconstant and mutable exertions of man's weak and fallible mind; the Hope arising from it will scarcely deserve so good a name, and may turn out to be at last only of that deceitful or deceived kind, called *the hope of the hypocrite, that perisheth*.

§ 42. In the absence of faith and hope, where can Charity, or true *Love*, towards God and man, spring up or appear? This love arises from the firm conviction of God's goodness, and from an ardent desire to show it,
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in the remembrance of his mercy. It is possible, that a man may be humane, and mild, and benevolent ; but all this kindness of temper (desirable as it is) must be upon natural principles, worldly motives, or worldly ends, if it proceed not from the grace of God. He cannot heartily love God, nor the things of God, nor desire to glorify him, nor work for the spiritual benefit of men, nor be employed, with a *single eye* and a *simple heart*, upon the momentous objects of his own salvation, by any powers of his own fluctuating reason, or without some latent considerations terminating in carnal ease, interest, or glory. Such a man, having no faith, or hope, or love, but from his own depraved mind, cannot possibly *serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him* ;* because he lives upon

* Luke i. 74.

probabilities only at the best, and, possibly to him, mere fallacies, speculations, or delusions, resulting from his own varying and imperfect apprehensions. If he cannot live upon some *certain* grounds, or without faithless fear, he must be oppressed with anxiety and torment, if he has feeling; and, if he have no feeling, he must be involved in the darkness of unbelief, practical atheism, or that sort of despair, which leads to carelessness and indifference, or to all "wretchlessness of unclean living." The pleasures and delights of faith, and hope, and charity, and the things which accompany salvation, are out of the question with such a man. And he will most forcibly prove by his disposition or actions, in some way or other, that he, who has no share in the kingdom of Christ, cannot

not live out of the dominion of the devil.

It may be also observed, that the Holy Scripture always leads the heart of the Believer to love the PERSON of Christ, as well as his work and office in the economy of redemption. Where this personal attachment does not take place, and abide, the professor may very justly question, whether his faith be of the right sort, or rather, whether he has any faith at all deserving that name. This may serve to detect many prevalent errors of the day, which lead men, not to Christ firmly and entirely, but to their own works and wisdom for the attainment of salvation. How barren, and how dry, are the hearts of such men ! How little of gracious effect or knowledge results from those, who give themselves up to these delusions ! Love only can animate, elevate, and sweeten,
Duty.

Duty. Duty without Love becomes barren, if attempted, and commonly a burden. See the lives of men, who act upon the plan of recommending themselves to the divine favour by what they can do of themselves; and they will generally be found, either deeply tinctured with a gloomy moroseness, sufficient to impress others with dismal apprehensions of the nature of religion, or with a mixture of pastimes and amusements, in the full spirit of the world, with which true religion ever was and ever will be found, as incompatible as the worship of God and Mammon.

§ 43. But there are people, who will object and say, that, according to this statement, the right knowledge of the Christian Religion is wholly a matter of *divine influence* or *inspiration*. Granted. It does indeed, when genuinely attained, shine into the mind, warm the heart, and ani-

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mate the life, solely through the Inspiration and Influence of God's Holy Spirit. For this "inspiration," for this both "burning and shining light," the Church of England, following *the lively oracles* of truth, instructs its members constantly to pray ; and, particularly, when they assemble for public worship. Surely, she would neither mock God, nor us, when she constantly enjoins us to implore *the inspiration of his Spirit*, in order to think, to speak, to do, what is holy, just, and good. Her articles also profess, what her Liturgy prescribes. Her Homilies, only more at large, explain and confirm the object of her constituted forms. They breathe (if the phrase may be used) one and the same spirit of faith.* The same Spirit pervades *all the*

* See various passages in the Liturgy, and the two Homilies on the Misery of Man, the Homily on

the Confessions of Faith, published by the several Reformed Churches on their deliverance from the tyranny and the errors of Rome.* All the Fathers of the primitive Christian Church, whether Latin or Greek, confess more or less the same truth; and, it is remarkable, in that proportion too as their *piety* and *usefulness* were more or less eminent in their lives or writings. But, above all these who have only a derivative authority, the supreme judgement of God himself is that decisive rule, to which all men, calling themselves Christians, should implicitly bow, and to which all other men, however reluctant here,

on Whit-Sunday, and the third Homily or Sermon for Rogation Week.

* *Syntagma Conf. ferè passim, et speciatim Consens. Patrum*, ad calcem ejusdem libri. Edit. 1612.

must one day be compelled to submit. This judgement, this infallible rule, is contained in his most holy word, and, like a golden vein, runs through a multitude of texts, with the clearest brightness, and with the fairest analogy, encouraging those, whose eyes are opened to see it, to search with industry and advantage for the precious ore. Or, using another figure, this holy word, like a dial, correctly drawn and standing fair for observation, affords information by the immediate shining of the sun, but only to those, who have eyes to distinguish characters and mark its delineations. It is an axiom in this holy book, a sacred axiom on which all knowledge and experience must turn, that every true believer is and must be *born of the Spirit* of God, and by this spiritual birth becomes *a child of God*; but, on the other hand, *if any man*,
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be his appearance, or professions, or natural advantages, whatever they may, *have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

§ 44. It may, therefore, well become those, who deny *the inspiration* of the Holy Spirit for the right knowledge of God, or the things of God, to inquire; how far they are prepared by such denial to object to his very Being in the God-head, and to his whole Office in the business of man's salvation. Conduct of this sort will give no small cause to suspect, that their principle is not very strong in points, for which they find so little use to themselves, and so much occasion for reproach and misrepresentation concerning others. It is but *doubtful* or sandy ground, however, which people of this description have chosen, when they undertake to raise a superstructure for the skies upon the mutability or shallowness of
reason,

reason, and by a feeble succession of their own endeavours and abilities.

§ 45. “ But (says another) all this is rank Euthusiasm !” — A hard name is sometimes a very convenient thing. It can serve as a masked battery to fire off the bolts of malice, or as a skreen to cover the enmity of the heart and its secret rage against truth and piety. But, if by enthusiasm be meant *error* ; let it be first proved by the word of God, and then be renounced and exploded accordingly. All wrong principles, all false practices, every error that leads to sin, and (I may add, what is too little thought of) the sin of every error, cannot be too much or too frequently explained and condemned. Show the matter to be erroneous ; and then dispose of it, as it deserves.—But if, by the hard name of Enthusiasm, or by any other hard and opprobrious name, be understood a hearty

heartly ardent pursuit of the things of God, and a renunciation of all other things, which tend to paralyze the affections and faith of a Christian towards his Redeemer, or to render him more accommodating to the spirit of the world and the corruptions of the flesh; then I, for one, must confess and deplore, that I have already but too—too little of this fervor and animation within me, and that I have abundantly most cause to complain of my coldness, and deadness, and barrenness, in the things, which, of all others, do essentially concern me. It is, and it ought to be, therefore, my earnest prayer to that Divine Spirit, whose office in the case appears to be flagrantly insulted and vilified, that, if this disposition of mind be indeed what an irreligious world, or what inconsistent professors of religion, from attachment to the world, or from the
fear

fear and love of man, may call enthusiasm ; I may be more and more an enthusiast, with a clear and irreproachable conduct, every day of my life. I may and ought to grieve, that I have not followed the Captain of my salvation, so closely, so warmly, so entirely, as I should ; but it seems impossible, that it can be my shame or my sorrow in eternity, for having loved or served him too much in this world, or for having been counted worthy to suffer reproach and contempt from my fellow-worms for his name's sake. Rail at me (the Christian may say) as much as you please ; but, if I discover any thing amiss by your censure, however peevish or ill-intentioned in itself, I shall hope to be thankful for an opportunity of correcting my error ; yet, for your own sake, take care how you blaspheme the doctrines of my God.

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How base and degenerate is the spirit of fallen man ! Almost any creature, without much examination of principle or practice, may be an enthusiast in music, in painting, in all the sciences and arts, or in things far less innocent than these ; and shall not only be tolerated, but applauded, for being a most ardent enthusiast. Whereas, in religion, in an affair of the largest and deepest importance, in the zealous concern for the everlasting salvation of his soul, a man shall be dubbed an enthusiast, a fool, a knave, a hypocrite, and all that is monstrous and absurd, though his life and conduct may be useful or unblameable before those who know him best, and though his faith and hope shall be confirmed most unanswerably by the truth of God himself.

§ 46. And, after all, what may we rightly understand by enthusiasm in

matters of religion? Perhaps, the following statement may nearly approach the truth. Enthusiasm may be considered as the inflated imagination of wild and conceited minds, authorized neither by reason nor revelation. Not by *reason*; because such enthusiasm is entirely ideal or speculative, and rests upon no real knowledge of natural objects, or sensible facts, or credible testimonies, which are the common topics of reason. Not by *revelation*; because it leaves or abuses *the written word* and the analogy of faith contained therein, which is the only basis and criterion of God's will towards man, and, instead of this, launches forth into the broad sea of human reveries, without chart or compass from that word, and commonly against it. In the former respect, are included the idle visionaries of all sorts, *who sport themselves with their own deceptions;*

ceivings, regarding only the follies and nonsense of this present world. In the latter, all those are comprehended, who dabble in religion without the Bible in their hands, or the God of the Bible in their hearts; who fancy that, by their own wisdom, they can discover those truths, which, God says, cannot be discovered without his effectual aid; and who therefore boldly proceed by their own fallen reason, which, being spiritually blind, is incompetent, and by itself fallacious, in these matters; or by that false philosophy, the result of this carnal unassisted reason, which begins with doubt of God's truth from the presumption of an erring heart, and usually ends with irreligion, indifference, or shameless infidelity. Both these sorts are in fact mere speculators and visionaries in divine things: Both either doubt or mis-state, what

they do not understand and cannot know without an assistance which they slight; and they differ from each other chiefly in this—The one kind are florid and fantastical enthusiasts, in things natural as well as spiritual, without the shadow of reason; and the other, bringing spiritual things upon the same ground with the natural, do therefore proceed *insanire cum ratione*, and become rationally wild or sophistical enthusiasts, embracing a deluded imagination for life and truth. Alas! how often, in matters of grace and salvation, have these deceits of the human mind, like *ignes fatui*, bewildered and led astray men, in other respects learned and wise, into all the variety of errors! That man, however, cannot properly be named an enthusiast, who walks with God, who follows, and desires to follow, no rule but his revealed word, and who aims to

to renounce every thing which may hinder his enjoyment of the one, or which appears to contradict the other.—Enthusiasts may be fools, and even knaves, but atheists and infidels are spiritual thieves by profession : They neither fear God nor regard man. They rob the one of his glory, and the other of his hope. Self is their all in all ; and, thus isolated, their expectations are poor and perishing in this life, while a dismal dark void is always before them respecting an hereafter.—What a mad and daring game is this, thus to stake all possibility of eternal happiness for notions which cannot be proved ; and which, if they could be proved, could yield no true satisfaction, but must only leave men in the condition of beasts, who die in stupidity, and then rot away into dust and eternal forgetfulness ! We should be more surprized at all this idiotcy,

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if we did not know, that, as it originates generally from the indulgence or the wish to indulge the most brutal passions, so it frequently ends in the debasement of the understanding, or the perversion of the most necessary truths into the grossest and most dangerous errors.

§ 47. It may also be remarked, that sometimes it appears to happen, that, in order to avoid the odious reproach of enthusiasm, serious persons run into a kind of fallacy, common enough among poets and rhetoricians, by personifying abstract ideas and imputing effects to effects, rather than their primary and actuating agent or cause. — But it would be the truth, and nothing but the truth, to maintain at once, that the Spirit of God or the grace, the power, and the other essential attributes, of the Holy Ghost, work all and in every thing truly good,
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in order to make and to keep a man truly a Christian. Why should good men avoid to mention that HOLY NAME, without whose effective agency we can neither think, speak, or do any thing, that is right or acceptable to God; or use, in its stead, terms of circumlocution, which may avoid offence to natural men, who, after all, will be offended with real truth, or terms which may square better with the ideas and language of an unbelieving world?

§ 48. Much also has been said of late upon the subject of Schism, as well as enthusiasm; and truly serious persons, who abhor both of these in their evil sense, have been charged with maintaining or abetting them. But the charge is misapplied, and should have been directed elsewhere. Those are the worst *Schismatics*, the real and most dangerous dissenters from

from the doctrine, and the greatest disgrace to the discipline, of the Church of England, who, while they profess to be its ministers and members, do most strenuously contradict, by evil life or heterodox principles, the Fundamentals of the Christian religion, and pervert the true end and purpose, for which our own, or indeed any other, Establishment was protected by secular laws. Idle and dissolute clergymen, who (one must say with regret) are to be found in every place, of worldly entertainment, and almost in any place rather than in their duties or churches, where the service seems too often tedious and burthensome; the loose, the ignorant, the unprincipled, laymen, professing at the same time to be members of the Church; these, and these chiefly, are the grand *Schismatics* and *Enthusiasts*, the ardent and persevering Enthusiasts, in

in the pursuits of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and should be altogether the first objects of episcopal care, and of episcopal correction. Serious and considerate people look at the *use* and *result* of things; and if they are led to lament, that the sacred offices are filled by men, not selected for their worth or their piety, but from worldly or political motives only, and that therefore the duties of religion are huddled over as matters of dry and unimportant concern, or are regarded mainly for the purposes of secular interest; how can they be blamed, if, turning from such persons with the same disgust which would have expelled them in a moment from the primitive church, they resort, if they have opportunity, to more worthy pastors in the establishment, or even out of it, if no such pastors are at hand! Can it be expected, that per-

sons, really concerned for truth and salvation, will listen to the voice of the fox-hunter, the gambler, the sordid worldling, or the openly profane? The voice of such strangers to truth and godliness they will not, they cannot, follow. These, *whose chief god is their belly*, are the worst enemies both of the Cross of Christ, and of the excellent Establishment to which they claim to belong. No wonder then, that, in a thousand instances, the laity contribute to the support of such men with reluctance, while they observe that, not the souls of the people unhappily committed to their charge, but their own miserable indulgences, are the main points of sedulity and concern. It is with a very ill grace, therefore, that ministers of this stamp complain of the increase of Dissenters. They themselves are the principal cause of that increase. For,

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though unity is certainly a most desirable thing, there can be no real or sincere unity without the bond of truth. The real schismatics are those who divide and depart from the truth, which only can influence the heart into the love of God, and the life into goodness and usefulness among men. To insist therefore upon religious unity with worldly, graceless, ungodly, men, is almost as strange as an amalgamation of fire and water, or the attempt to form an indissoluble texture by a rope of sand. The true way to reduce sects and parties is to exceed them in all zeal and duty ; or, as a bishop of our church once recommended to a complainant against dissenters, to “ out-preach them, out-pray them, out-live them.” This would reclaim many, and prevent (under God) that much-to-be-feared dissolution of our ecclesiastical state, which ungodly

men in the Church, and unprincipled men out of it, are hastening on as fast as in them lies, and, in some instances, with a kind of wicked and malignant joy. — I say all this with the deepest concern; because I will yield to no man in zealous attachment to our constitution both of Church and State.

§ 49. I may farther digress, in this place, that it has been very much the custom of late years to decry all system in religion. — And what is *System*, but *a whole* exhibited with a due *consistency* or agreement among its several component parts? This is the sense of the word. And, if this be system, can there be any art or science, any general truth made up of particulars, without it? It would seem ridiculous, in the affairs of this world, to dispute such an idea: And, in religion, hath not the wisdom of
God

God given us a pure plan or system of unerring truth, every portion of which has a firm and necessary connection with all the rest in a bright and beautiful order? The synthesis of divine truth will bear an analysis, which cannot be said of the heterogeneous mass of human undigested errors. What can appear more perfectly arranged, when understood, (for, unhappily it is but too little understood,) than the whole ritual, called the Ceremonial Law, which is neither more nor less than the Gospel of Christ in shadow or emblem, and was intended as a mean to direct the people of Israel to look for the Messiah, and to act faith upon him, through those carnal ordinances, till he should appear? If the *shadow* or figure of *good things to come* be so perfect and complete, as it certainly is, and does appear to be upon the most correct examination; how much

much more the *things* themselves? And is not the Covenant of Grace, also, which insures them, ordered and complete in its several and distinct objects and intentions? Is it to be supposed, that divine Wisdom should build without a plan or arrangement? Do not its providential dispensations and creations perfectly harmonize “in number, weight, and measure?” And shall its greatest glory that we can know, the vast economy of redemption, according to the eternal counsel of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be without a specific arrangement of parts, concord, and determination? Will any man say, that God hath revealed principles, which are discordant with each other, and can never compose one general body of truth, merely because he himself is not able to comprehend it? And is it not the privilege of every Christian to *grow in grace,*

grace, and *in the knowledge* of divine truths, so as to be able to *apprehend* more and more, through the teaching of the Divine Spirit, *the Height and Breadth, the Length and Depth, of the Love of Christ?* And, though ultimately, these, like diverging rays, may surpass the extent of his apprehension; yet they are not different, though distinct, from each other, nor yet will lead him into faithless contradictions and perplexities. But may not the plea against all system in religion be founded upon the desire, rather of partially introducing doctrines, which, when detached, may be distorted and misunderstood, than principles forming *together* the whole counsel of God, and containing in unison the sum of the Scripture, and so less liable to perversion? Doubtless there are doctrines which are so heterogeneous as to be irreconcilable
with

with each other, and can by no means be brought into the proportion or unity of truth. No wonder, then, that their authors or patrons cry out against system, the object of which is to show forth the concord or disagreement of principles. — I beg not to be understood in this case, as pleading for a system of *man's devising*, but for the whole of that consistent train of truths, found every where in Holy Writ, and which, when placed together, by *comparing things spiritual with spiritual*, constitute what the Apostle calls THE ANALOGY OF FAITH, and which he himself was enabled by the Spirit of God most beautifully to exemplify in that body of Divinity, his Epistle to the Romans. It is matter of serious concern, that many professing, and (I hope) serious, people seem so frightened by the alarm, which some men, not too intelligent

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or correct in matters of religion, have thought proper to raise against *systems* and *doctrines*, that they revolt at their very name as at poison or danger, and give themselves up to flights and feelings really enthusiastic and licentious, under the impressions of a heated imagination. A lively zeal in the things of God is, indeed, almost essential to the Christian life; but it should however be a zeal *according to knowledge*, and consonant with the rule of the Scriptures; or it may prove a most pestiferous wild-fire, and scatter delusions and ruin with its flames. To ask some of these uninformed and unprincipled ones *what* they believe, puzzles them; and the answer is commonly crude and incoherent. How they *feel*, or rather how they *dream*, is their all in all. It is not surprizing, therefore, if ships with such high and wide-spreading

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sails,

sails, dashing on without chart, or compass, or ballast, are often wrecked among the quick-sands of apostasy, or fall to pieces upon the rocks of worldly trials and temptations. If it be meant, however, only to object to a system of doctrines, when merely cold, dry, and speculative ; that objection will hold, at least, equally strong against all crude, undigested, unsystematic, doctrines ; and perhaps more strongly ; because, if these are untrue or misapprehended ; as most probably some of them may be upon investigation, it is impossible that they should become experimental ; and can, therefore, tend only, through perversion or falsehood, to lead the mind to wild, delusive, and perhaps dangerous, consequences. We are not pleading for airy theories or metaphysical speculations of *man's* imagination or *devising*, but for those solid and solemn truths, which God himself

hath

hath revealed, and which are reduced into gracious *fact* and *experience*, by his own power, in the bosom of every real believer. And if a man may have (as doubtless he may) dry and barren speculations upon the truth itself, rich and fruitful as it is in its own nature; what epithets shall we find for the speculations of error?—But, to return to our principal subject:

§ 50. *If any man be in Christ*, (said the Apostle,) *he is a new creature, a new creation.* The *old* things of the *flesh* are passed away: the *flesh* itself, *is crucified with Christ*; and *all things are become new.* He hath new hopes, new cares, new desires. He prays *by* the Spirit *for* the Spirit; and, being brought into the new state of adoption as the reconciled child of a heavenly Father, he hath the temper and prospects of such a child, and asks, and delights to ask and live, as becomes

his new condition.* O what pleasant hours is such a one privileged to enjoy in conversing with his gracious Lord by prayer and praise, by meditation on his holy Word, by faith and hope in his sure and indefectible promises, by

* “It is the Holy Ghost, *and no other thing*, that doth quicken the minds of men, stirring up good and godly motions in their hearts, which are agreeable to the will and commandment of God, such as otherwise of their own crooked and perverse nature they could never have. That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit: As who should say, Man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motions, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds. As for the works of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions, *if he have any at all in him*, they proceed *only* of the Holy Ghost, who is *the only worker of our sanctification*, and maketh us new men in Christ Jesus.” HOM. on Whit-Sunday.

love shed abroad in the heart, and in the practice of that true holiness, which, receiving every good and every power to do good from God, returns the praise of having done it, by him and for him, to the heavenly Donor alone! “ Surely may such a one say, the Lord hath loved me with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving kindness hath he drawn me, even when I was far from him; and now, having brought me nigh, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, he will preserve me to the end, as much by his unvarying truth as he led me at first by his spontaneous mercy. What shall I *render* then unto the Lord for all the benefits which he hath bestowed upon me? — I can only *render* to him by *receiving* from him. The more I know of his goodness and taste of his bounty, the more am I indebted to his grace. He himself must, and (I

 doubt

doubt not) will, enable me to receive the cup of salvation, and to call upon his holy name, as my Lord and my God !” And, “ when the heavens are
 “ rolled together as a scroll, and the
 “ elements melt with fervent heat ;
 “ when the earth, with all the inhabi-
 “ tants of it, are dissolved ; then
 “ may I, and each of my brethren,
 “ say ; *I have lost nothing* : still I
 “ can rejoice in the Lord, and joy in
 “ the God of my salvation !”

§ 51. With respect to others ; what have these to say ? From the corruption of their hearts, they now absolutely choose their own part. They call evil good, and good evil : And they act accordingly. Those among them, who are profligate and licentious, scoff and scout the very name of faith, hope, holiness, and the things of God and salvation. They are all for the world, and the things
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of the world, and desire to have no part or lot in the matter. What right then have such to complain, if they are dealt with only according to their desire? They counted the lives of real Christians *to be madness, and their end without honour*. And if they themselves find hereafter, that they have made a foolish choice; yet they will then remember, it was their own choice; and that, when any thing better was set before them, they put it all away, and, deliberately or perseveringly, preferred vice to virtue, earth to heaven, and the service of the devil to the service of God.

§ 52. And here it may be observed, that this circumstance is and ought to be a most awful and alarming consideration to every man who is conscious to himself, that he has no desire for the influence of the Holy Spirit, and of course no solicitude for his salvation.

vation. If such a one should cast an eye upon these reflections, let me earnestly exhort him to pause for a moment, and ask himself—If he have no wish or desire for these blessings now, and if death should overtake him in this perilous state of mind, how dreadful indeed must his plunge be into the everlasting, yet unavoidable, abyss before him! If he be certain of nothing else, of this he is most assuredly certain, that he hath no present comfort of faith, and no just prospect of hope; unless the vague idea can be called one, that he shall either be nothing at all, (which is the atheist's best consolation,) or worse than nothing (which is the unbeliever's dread) throughout eternity. And, if the perseverance in this course, accompanied with a detestation of the things of God, be not arrant rashness, or rather the stupid and headstrong
madness

madness of sin and unbelief; let him smite upon his heart, and again deliberately ask—"What is?"

§ 53. Our Lord says, *Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me*; because indeed every carnal unregenerate heart is and must ever, while it continues such, be in a state of continual offence and dislike, with him, with the nature of his life, with the purpose of his word in *hiding pride from man*, with the gracious confessions of his people, and with the principle and power of his salvation. He, therefore, who is not offended in Christ, must be one, who is *transformed into his image*, and so is capable of a sympathy or unity of spirit with him. He, who hath not this sympathy, but can only feel *with* the world, and *as* the world, will ever distaste both the simplicity and mortifying nature of the Gospel, and,

above all, must be disgusted with the very mention of the *inward work* of the Spirit of God, as outrageous stuff or fanaticism ; forgetting or not knowing the many things, which God himself in his Word, and his Church in all ages, have said concerning it. And if it can be endured by such a one for a moment, it will not be *for its own sake*, but for the sake of that paltry dress of human wit or language, with which some ingenious man or other imagines he can adorn it.

§ 54. Those of a graver sort, who are more refined in their conduct and views, but who, building too much upon the powers of fallen nature, the deplorable state of which they do not understand, will therefore oppose, directly or indirectly, the covenant or constitution of Grace, established by the three Persons in Jehovah, for the execution of which, these *Alehim*, or
Witnesses;

Witnesses, or Persons, have revealed themselves under distinct and descriptive names, from almost the beginning of the world. Possessed by this error in the outset, such men speak not of faith as a grace communicated officially by the Holy Spirit, nor of the other concomitant graces as entirely proceeding from his divine agency ; but as the considerate acts and determinations of a man's own mind, after due reflection upon the propositions and arguments which have been set before him, independently, at least, in the turning point, of all influence from on high. Now, the people, who take up with this merely rational and self-created faith, and deny or limit the spiritual operation of the Holy One in renovating and preparing the heart for the reception of his mercy, will have no cause to say they have been hardly dealt by, if they do not find

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salvation

salvation in this their own way. They pertinaciously refused and resisted the free and sovereign grace of God set forth in the Gospel ; perhaps reviled it for enthusiasm, or by some other hard name, and embraced, upon the plan and principle of their own reason, (denying that it was, as God calls it, corrupt, depraved, and darkened,) some or other of these schemes of morality and self-righteousness, with which the world hath been amused from age to age, and which the antient heathens understood and expressed, at least, as well as most of their modern successors. It therefore was a true observation of a valuable writer, that “ it has fared with the Gospel, as it commonly does with the Law : when men find they cannot come up to it, they try to bring it down to them.” But the Lord will doubtless be found to have decided with perfect justice by
such

such persons in the end, as he hath already decided in the case of the Jews, *who, being ignorant of God's righteousness, went about to establish their own righteousness, and, therefore, did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God.* Acting upon their own will and imagination, they found, that what through grace was proposed for their wealth became, through the perverseness of blinded nature, only an occasion of falling; or, to use the words of the Prophet quoted by the Apostle: *Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and rock of defence*; or, the words of our Lord: *Father, I thank thee, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: Even so, Father; for, so it seemed good in thy sight.* To these also were addressed God's awful admonition:

tion : *Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks : walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand ; ye shall lie down in sorrow.*

§ 55. “ But is there no want of charity in these statements, which seem so particularly exclusive ? ” — It has been lately well observed ; “ There are few things so calculated to impose on superficial thinkers, as that indiscriminating *cant* of charity, which characterizes the present day.” But there is no real charity in the circulation of falsehood, or in the support of error. If the judgement be according to truth, it cannot be void of that best charity, which springs from the Author of truth ; and, however specious in its appearance, no other charity (if so it may be called) which is not allied closely to truth, or which, in the conduct of the divine Spirit,

Spirit, doth not lead to the glory of God in the acknowledgement of the truth as it is in Jesus, is admissible upon the Christian plan. Genuine charity is a *fruit of the Spirit*; and they, who have not the Spirit, though they may, from natural causes and impressions, be humane and beneficent, are and must be, in the sense of Scripture, *earthly, sensual*, (and if they continue in virulent opposition to the truth of God) *devilish*. Christian charity may and doth yield, and bear, and forbear, and become all things to all men, so far as may be consistent with fidelity to the honour of God our Saviour; but faith and truth can yield nothing, without a breach of charity itself; because, by yielding and swerving, a way would be opened for all sorts of errors and deceits, and might lead to the spiritual injury of many. The wise man's rule, therefore,

fore, in this case, must, above all considerations of consequences, be strictly adhered to; *Buy the truth, and sell it not.* Part not with it, at any time, for any person, for any *purpose*, whatsoever.

§ 56. If these things be so, and if the representation here made of them be found consonant with the word of truth and the analogy of faith, which runs through it; the grace of God may make it of use, by his own application, to some sincere, though young and weak, believers, who have been led away from the free grace of the Gospel to their own doings, and from an entire reliance upon Christ and his Spirit for pardon, wisdom, and strength, to a partial dependence at least upon the exercise of their own reason and abilities. Many such have been greatly distressed under trials by false representations of the Gospel,
and

and by being put upon legal views and legal workings for spiritual life and salvation. These are, for such a purpose, what the Prophet calls, *broken cisterns which can hold no water*, to which false or unskilful teachers are ever leading men, instead of *the only fountain of living waters*. Under pretence of guarding the Gospel, they darken the Gospel, by putting a clumsy coarse veil of man's devising before the eyes of the mind, the effect of which is to hide the Gospel, and debase the Redeemer. No sinner can ever be truly wise, holy, or happy, but in beholding clearly and with *open face* the Sun of Righteousness, who sweetly hath healing in his wings. This is the only legitimate light and consolation for every truly-convinced and broken-hearted child of fallen Adam, every gracious and humbled soul. Froth and filth may be taken

for fine and favourite nourishment by the unquickened and unenlightened ; but the sincere, or unadulterated, milk of the word is the only food that can satisfy and strengthen, in the ways of holiness and truth, the genuine children of God. And whenever these mistake the one for the other, they presently begin to doubt, and to distrust, and to grow cold or dark, and perhaps, if not mercifully prevented, to slip into some other egregious errors of heart or of life. The grace, which brings men for all their pardon and peace to Christ, can alone enable them to trample upon sin and falsehood, and to walk comfortably and honourably with him.

§ 57. “ Are men, then, to do nothing ? ” — Let them try to do all they can. If they are really able of themselves to believe in Christ, and to walk with Christ, or to secure their
own

own salvation, and so confidently to stand upon this ground; they will be justly condemned, if they do not exercise that ability, and accomplish that profession. Out of their own mouths they will be fairly sentenced, if they fail. Let them pray, therefore, and strive, and earnestly endeavour, with every energy they can find or feel, to reach the ears of God, in prayer, and *to work out their own salvation*: There is no objection to all this in the *fact*, or to a thousand times as much more, which they may think themselves able to bring. But, after all, we must not hold forth a lie, for a safe *principle*, nor keep back a truth to maintain such persons in a peaceful delusion. If they do all this in the spirit of true holiness, they have already received the grace and blessing of God; and their prayers and services in Christ shall undoubtedly be

heard and accepted: But, if this be attempted in their own spirits and strength, without assistance from on high, we may boldly affirm, that the whole of it will be found nothing better than the *will-worship*, reprobated in the Scriptures, which has not an atom of holy sincerity in it, and amounts but to some faint and faithless ebullitions of the carnal mind, that *mind of the flesh*, which, being at enmity with God, can neither seek him really, nor have a true delight in the knowledge of his ways. And therefore, on the other hand, we must observe, that it is necessary in the first instance to *live* in order to *act*, and that the question is not, whether righteousness or true holiness should be practised upon earth, for this not even a heathen will deny; but *whence* men shall obtain *the power* to perform it. Whoever is *in Christ*, will and
must

must endeavour to be *like him*. The Holy Spirit always does, naturally and necessarily, lead to this purpose. And, therefore, *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ* (and he can only prove it, by having the mind of Christ, and by following the example of Christ), *he is none of his*. This surely is enough to guard and to secure the interests of holiness: And, if this cannot work that effect, all other methods will prove their own falsehood upon the experiment, by deceiving and leaving the soul deserted, at a time, when it hath the greatest possible need of clear and certain truth and divine assistance. To this I beg to add, that I should be sorry to say one word, which might tend to discourage any broken-hearted person from praying for the grace and assistance of the Holy Spirit. Such, above all others, are most prepared for the
 business ;

business; for, He himself hath already *begun* with them; or the desire to pray could not have entered truly into their minds. Nor did he ever give that desire to disappoint it. But bold and presumptuous people, who think they can ask when they please, and are confident in their own powers to ask aright—these are the people, who are to be told, that, *thus* coming, they do not and cannot ask at all. Their own self-righteous spirit, in conjunction with their supposed free-will, lies at the bottom of a hardened and unknowing heart: and these principles of pride and presumption are so averse to the gate, which is too straight for human corruption to enter, and to the way, which is too narrow for the swellings of man's conceit to proceed in, that it is no wonder, if carnal ingenuity be always upon the stretch to find out passages more open and more agreeable

agreeable to its own views and inclinations. Such professors follow the example which the Apostle condemns in the Israelites of his day ; they *follow*, or pretend to follow, *after the law of righteousness, but do not*, and cannot, *attain to the law of righteousness : Wherefore ? Because they seek it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law : for they stumble at that stumbling-stone.*—It may also be noted that one error is ill supplied by another. Arminianism is but poorly calculated to extirpate Anti-arminianism. And, though self-righteousness is better for the world than unrighteousness, yet both are averse to the Spirit of the Gospel, both are enemies in principle and practice to the redemption of Christ and to the holy office of the Divine Spirit, and consequently both pernicious to the souls of men. The Pharisee and the Publican are
each

each reprobated in the revelation of God, with some additional stigma, not much in favour of the former. There are Antinomian hypocrites, doubtless; but for one Antinomian professor, who is and must be odious from the very circumstances which are inseparably connected with sin, there are multitudes of Arminian false and ignorant professors of religion, who, because of their specious appearance and declarations before men, receive the applause of the world, and become puffed up with all the confidence and presumption of an unbroken heart, or (as the Apostle calls it) with their “fleshly mind.”

§ 58. The fact is; all carnal professors, whose spirits have not been subdued, or brought into the mould of the Gospel, cannot really *love* that which strips them, which exposes their weakness and worthlessness in point

point of goodness, and which places them in the condition of condemned objects for mere mercy, because objects of mere wrath and abhorrence. Like the Israelites of old, who despised the *manna*, which was called *Angels' food from heaven*, because it typified heavenly things; so, many showy, but carnal, professors of our day, respecting the pure and simple truths of divine grace, seem ready to say, "Our soul loatheth this light bread: We want flesh, something of the flesh; a little at least of its wisdom, strength, and righteousness, to feed upon. To live by faith, is like living upon air. Give us the more solid and substantial diet, which our own hands and hearts can prepare, of goodness and holiness; and upon this we can build our hope, because we can see and feel something here to build upon for eternity." — High presumption

indeed! A foundation upon the quicksand, which will either sink into the gulph beneath, or be overwhelmed by those blasts of trial, which will one day beat upon it!

§ 59. Hence, one cannot but reflect, that it is no small proof, though not intended by those who give it, of the truth of the principles herein maintained, that the men of the world, and carnal or reasoning professors of religion, such as an Evangelist called “the stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, always resisting the Holy Ghost,” have an implacable aversion to them. These of every age and every name, *speaking evil in this case of what they know not, but know only* (says the Scripture) *as brutes know things naturally*; judging according to sensual impressions, and not according to that spiritual life, which is the gift of God,
and

and in which faith, hope, and every other grace of the Spirit, are carried into the judgement to discern truth, and into the affections for its due exercise and enjoyment. That is not the Spirit of Christ, which does not lead to him, both in doctrine and practice. His genuine work is the production of light in the mind, and of love in the heart. But *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are only to be spiritually discerned.*

§ 60. It may be urged again and again, from the importance of the subject, that our Lord says, *Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me;* because every worldly, unregenerate, heart naturally is and must be offended with him, with the purity of his life, with his people who partake

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of that life, and with his gracious doctrines, which tend to humble the pride and conceit of man, and to lead up the affections of the soul from the things of the world. He, therefore, who is not offended with Christ, has been reconciled to him through the blood of his cross, and by the transforming power of his Spirit. All others, who are strangers to this reconciliation and change of mind, dislike the Gospel, not only for the simplicity of its manner as laid down in the word, but also for the tendency of its influence, which is directly opposite, in almost every point, to the bent and inclination of the natural heart. And, if the truth of the Gospel can be borne with by such men at any rate, it must be adorned with some gay dress, in the texture of which fine reasoning, brilliant imagery, elegant style, or fervid glowing diction, must appear
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as the charming and conspicuous attractions ; while, in reality, these rather serve, in a thousand instances, to hide or disguise that glorious grace of truth, which is always most illustrious in the display of its own intrinsic beauty, and most useful when least loaded with artificial incumbrances. Gold needs not gilding ; but only to be cleansed from the dross or filth, which may have been added by art or falsehood. It is not a wrong observation by the late Dr. Johnson : “ Religion must be shown as it is : suppression and addition equally corrupt it.”*

§ 61. Placing the matter in another point of view ; the person who disclaims the potency of nature and the righteousness of the flesh, who de-

* Life of Waller.

pend entirely upon his Redeemer for grace to help out of his fulness, and who dreads to be left for a moment to his own will or wisdom, is at least as safe as any of those, who think that by their own exertions they can begin, and perhaps, by some imagined subsequent help of a divine aid, can carry on the means, and secure the end, of their own salvation. For, such a man is under another constitution from these persons, and loves holiness by a renewed mind; he works righteousness by a super-added strength; he is and must be unhappy out of constant fellowship with his Saviour; his conscience is made and kept tender by the Spirit of Holiness, which acts upon his heart, as well as his life; his soul delights in prayer and in the praise of his Redeemer; he seeks a due abstraction, not from the business merely, but from the spirit of the world, knowing that,

that, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: In short, if holiness could be any condition of obtaining heaven, he has it from a true source, and must have it in greater purity, if not in greater abundance of outward show, than it is possible for those to have, who seek it from their own powers. These are but weak as means, and must be uncertain as to their end. Those who depend upon them must, therefore, live in weakness and in doubt. On the other hand, the real Christian, one made such by God himself out of a convinced and humbled sinner, self-condemning and self-condemned in every motive of his own heart and every action of his own life, is enabled in the issue both to lift up his head under a sense of the divine mercy, and to spend himself for the divine glory, beyond comparison with the
workers

workers of Pharisaic holiness. But when he has done much and done all, he can meekly say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner: in doing the best, I could not come up to the fulness of my desires or my duty: I have no title, no claim, but that of an unprofitable servant!" Thus, true godliness is to him as necessary, and as indispensable an accompaniment of salvation, as though it were the absolute condition and foundation of it. He loves it, he seeks it, he cannot be happy without it. "As the wheel (to use an old simile) doth not run well, that it *may* be round, but *because* it is made round" for that purpose; so the true believer doth not perform good works, that he *may* receive grace, but because he *hath* already received it. Instead, therefore, of being *vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind*, which can neither understand nor enjoy the things of

of God, HE HOLDS THE HEAD, *from which all the body, (i. e. the Church,) by joints and bands, (i. e. the individual members,) having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*

§ 62. It cannot, perhaps, be too often repeated, that these truths, however offensive to confident and self-righteous persons, are by no means discouraging to those, who have been taught of God the Spirit *to know* the extreme *sinfulness of sin*, or *the plague of their own hearts*, and who have the smallest desire for his special grace and assistance. If the desire be *sincere*, the Lord gave it, and will fully answer it in due time; for, to such as have the lowest true longing for his salvation, is the promise most specially and directly made. But if the prayer for the divine teacher be formal, pretended, affected, lifeless,

and unfeeling ; or if uttered only for the final purpose of exalting the powers of the flesh and the righteousness which the flesh would set up against the righteousness of God the Saviour ; it cannot be expected to receive an answer of peace ; because its intention proceeds in direct opposition to the rule of faith, and to the full and perfected salvation of Christ. All true prayer is a *heart-felt* expression of *want*, and the pathetic cry of the soul for things, which *it hath not in itself*, and which are *utterly out of its own reach and power*. It is an humble and direct application to God for his assistance, and for the blessings promised in his word, which he only can bestow. All other asking is but mock-prayer, dry and unfelt ; *the prayer of the hypocrite*, which, like himself and his hope, can only be expected to *perish*.

§ 63. This very important truth, the believer is desirous of maintaining most predominantly in his conscience ; and, feeling the difficulty of thus maintaining it through the conflicts of fallen nature and the opposition of carnal reason, he is much in prayer, that the Holy Spirit would confirm and establish the power and experience of this safe and humbling principle within him. — How differently does this doctrine affect the minds of other men ! To these, whose spirits have never been truly broken down by the spiritual application of the divine Law ; who have felt but little pain or anxiety on account of their natural guilt and state of enmity with God ; who have therefore but slight or theoretical views only of the condemnation in which they were born and have uniformly lived ; to these, Faith is but a light affair and a ready act of their own, and

Grace itself not a heavy one, yet always within their reach ; but “ *practice, practice,*” is all in all, and this practice, too, the result of human energy, the consequence of man’s exertions and endeavours. Their professed object is that impossible thing, to make old Adam good, instead of crucifying him ; or, at most, to graft the life of Christ upon that old vile stock, which is utterly contrary to it, instead of bringing in and strengthening the *new man*, which is not of the earth earthly, but a new creation in the soul by the Lord from heaven. Here stands the foundation of a thousand errors, in direct opposition to God’s covenant or constitution of grace. And if, by a life outwardly decent, by a commendable demeanour, by liberal acts of kindness, or by close attentions to the extrinsic forms of religion, (all of which are most highly incumbent

incumbent and necessary in their proper order,) they can thus acquire the shadow or assume the skeleton of Christians, and pass through the world with a high reputation among men; they sing a *requiem* to their souls, and possibly may be permitted to go on with little perturbation or inward trials to the end. The *strong one armed*, upon this plan, will *keep his goods in peace*. Those trials, and troubles, and anxieties of mind, respecting a sure interest in the salvation of Christ, the final victory over death, and the sure and approaching appearance before the Most Holy, are but little felt or seldom known by such men. Perhaps, they are treated as wild and irrational rhapsodies, enthusiastic reveries, or, at best, pitiable imbecilities, beneath the consideration, or deserving the censure, of the good and the wise. It is, however, too
certain,

certain, that people of this cast are apt to be very angry with those, who, believing that something more than mere practice is necessary to make up a real Christian, earnestly insist upon a pure and lively faith in Christ, wrought by the special operation of the Holy Ghost, and upon the other mortifying doctrines of free grace, God's election, the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer both active and passive, with the whole train of just and holy principles in perfect analogy with these. Now, though a clear and holy practice (as we have already observed) is *most indispensably necessary*, in itself and in its proper place, and also *must appear* to prove a man to be a real Christian, and *must form* a constituent part of his character as such; yet, by itself, it no more creates him a Christian, than the produce of a tree forms the trunk or the boughs

boughs on which it may grow. Life must first be in the root or stock, as every one knows, before fruit can be expected to appear in the branches. But, when this internal life exists both in the trunk and branches; then the fruit, with God's blessing, comes forward in due order and time, and demonstrates the truth and vigour of that life, from which it proceeds. Our Lord takes up the same figure. He is the vine, and the life of the vine. *Now, (said he to his disciples,) as the branch cannot bear fruit OF ITSELF, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for, WITHOUT me, ye can do nothing.*

It cannot be too much insisted upon, that a dry and unprofitable set of religious performances is quite as possible,

ble, as a dry and unprofitable set of religious principles; and that one man may be a Formalist in the strictest round of duties, equally with another in the most orthodox system of doctrines. The external and internal forms of godliness may also exist, not only without the power of it, but in the very denial of that power. But Truth, with the spirit, life, and practice, of the Truth, constitutes a real Christian, and can only afford him the solid proof and consolation of knowing himself to be one. Without this happy combination, all other things are but appearances and names to any man respecting his final state, however in the mean time they may affect others, and will leave him nearly, if not quite, just such as they found him. Nor is it the mere change of forms, or of principles, or even of actions, alone, which will serve the purpose;

purpose ; but it is the holy change of heart, an experimental renewal of mind, and the fruits of a living faith, united, which can truly deserve the character of vital religion, or exhibit the solid weight of impressive godliness. — Any man may be alarmed at the progress of *unrighteousness* ; but few are those who are affected by, or indeed who understand, the dangers of *self-righteousness*. And yet the latter is, at least, as great an enemy to the cross of Christ, and to the whole plan and spirit of the Gospel, as the former. The reason is ; the one, being gross or carnal, is obvious to the senses and apprehensions of the most worldly men ; the other, being a refined and more spiritual wickedness, is only discernible to the spiritual eye, and to this only when upon its guard and watchful to detect it. — As in science, so in religion ; a man must

know a great deal, before he can thoroughly understand himself, his own infirmities, or his own ignorance.

§ 64. Here, though it may seem a digression from our general subject, it may not be useless to say a few words concerning the *use* and the *abuse* of those means of grace, which God has instituted for the edification of his church in the world.

Experience sufficiently proves the truth of the Scripture, that there is no virtue or efficacy in the ordinances of religion, abstracted from the Holy Spirit, whose *instruments* they are, and without whose agency in them they have no life. They are truly the *means* of grace; but grace itself is the *end*. To rest, therefore, in the means, without seeking for the end, must be a gross perversion.

The *use* of the means is a blessed privilege, ordained of God: Their
abuse

abuse proceeds from want of faith, or from ignorance, in man. It is an abuse to substitute any outward ordinances for inward and vital religion; and it is an error to rest upon them, or to conclude upon the safety of our state by an outward punctuality and attendance only. Our attendance, indeed, in the right view, cannot be too punctual; and there is great reason to complain in many instances of the want of punctuality: but no exactness in this respect will serve by itself; nor can the word of God be expected to yield profit, if not mixed with faith in them that hear it. The use of the means is to bring the souls of men into a deeper sense of their own undone state by nature, and of course into a higher and more experimental view of the worth of the Saviour: The abuse has not unfrequently led men into the danger, which the

means were intended to prevent, either of fancying themselves righteous by external observances, or safe, though rather hardened than softened, by their attentions to them.

Those persons also abuse the means, who slight or neglect them. God's ordinances are not to be trifled with on the one hand, nor cast off on the other. Another man's *perversion* of good will not excuse my *rejection* of it. I might as justly starve myself, or go naked, because there are people who eat and drink to excess, or employ raiment for the purposes of pride. If people are found, who do not value the means truly, I am not therefore to undervalue them. If others mistake, respecting the word and sacraments, I am not to despise, by a contemptuous negligence, the Lord, who instituted them, and who hath promised to meet and bless his people, when
they

they come before him in his name, and do not *forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is*. Though some people attend upon divine ordinances so late, as though they wished for an excuse not to come at all ; such gross irreverence will not excuse the same conduct in me. It would indeed be taken for very ill manners to interrupt a feast in a private house ; and I am sure it is not good manners in God's house, either respecting him or the congregation, to molest his service by a tardy arrival : I am not, therefore, to follow so indecent an example. There are also, it is to be feared, some who believe that, by a constant attendance upon ordinances, (a practice right enough in itself,) they make an atonement for a careless or ungodly life ; — but is not this a matter of sad perversion and abhorrence ? — In a word ; no
 abuse

abuse can justify disuse ; much less can it militate against the proper use. Strong are the words of the Apostle, speaking of this ministry of means ; *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one, we are the savour of death unto death ; and to the other, the savour of life unto life : And who is sufficient for these things ?* But to return.

§ 65. There must be an internal likeness or capacity, that act of regeneration spoken of by our Lord in John iii. or there can be no communion or fellowship of the Divine Spirit, so often dwelt upon in the Scriptures. Light and darkness cannot assimilate. The reign of sin is in perpetual opposition to the reign of holiness. But true believers, with minds renewed, have an access through Christ, by one Spirit, unto the Father, and are there-
by

by enabled to enjoy and rejoice in the privilege of his children. In them, *the body is* become, with respect to its prevailing desires and activity, mortified or *dead because of the sin* that is in it: and it is one great part of their Christian warfare to fight down and to keep down the in-bred corruptions of the body, and to crucify the ever-rising affections and lusts of the flesh; for which purpose they are entitled to pray for the continual aid of the Holy Spirit, without whose assistance nothing of this kind can be truly and effectually performed.—But all this is quite another conduct from what some men inculcate; even that untrue and impossible thing, the making flesh and blood holy *in and by itself*, instead of looking to Christ for pardon, and to the Holy Spirit for their daily crucifixion. Such persons are ignorantly striving, if they really do strive, to
bring

bring something to the Law as a ground of hope, and are not living graciously in the faith of the Gospel for their present and eternal salvation. In this way, the divine order is inverted; and so false applications of the Gospel are often made to those who have no preparation for and no faith in it, and wrong references to the Law respecting others, who, as a Covenant of works, have fled from it to Jesus Christ as their only refuge. Such persons know not truly what real holiness is, nor that *Sanctification* hath a two-fold sense: 1. of *Separation* or *setting apart* particular persons as vessels of mercy for the master's use; 2. of *Purification* or keeping those vessels of mercy clean, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. These *two* cannot be separated.—None but such appropriated vessels can enter into the sanctuary

tuary of God, and as such must be kept holy, and be daily cleansed from all defilement.

§ 66. Scarcely any thing more demonstrably proves the weakness and the falsehood of merely human power in the business of salvation, than the common effect of those resolutions, which are made by men, from natural fear only, in the hours of sickness and danger, concerning the great amendment of future life, and the diligent pursuit after (what they think to be) peace with God. Certainly the Divine Spirit hath often blessed these visitations to the conversion of sinners; but not by leaving them to the force of their own resolutions, but by convincing them of their undone state by nature, and by showing them first the want and then the worth of the Saviour. The former persons, however, we must and do suppose to be as sin-

cere as their fears and horrors can make them in the moments of their distress; and there is no doubt, that they do firmly intend, at the time, to abide by their resolves and professions: But all this sincerity of intention, arising, not from genuine abhorrence of sin or hope in the Redeemer, but from the gloomy uncertainty, or rather the dismal apprehensions, of the eternal state before them, leads only, if left to itself, to increase the number of those sorrowful examples, which justify the strong and antient proverb, *The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.* These examples, therefore, serve to convince us, more entirely, that human nature, corrupted as it now is in all its faculties and powers, is utterly incapable of assuming a life of faith and real holiness, or, in the language of our Lord,

Lord, that *flesh and blood* (carnal and corrupt nature) *cannot inherit*, cannot understand, cannot receive, or enter into, *the kingdom of God*. The greatest saint that ever lived could not have become so of himself. *Saul*, the Pharisee, who possessed more natural advantages to this end, perhaps, than any other man, could not have become *Paul*, the humble and holy Apostle and Christian, without “the special grace of Christ preventing him, that he might have a good will, and working with him when he had it,” to enable him to bring forth much fruit, as we find he did above all ordinary measures, to the glory of his Lord. — *Without me* (said Christ) *ye can do nothing*; nothing to the purpose of truth or goodness, but enough and enough to every thing contrary to both.

§ 67. It was justly observed by a good man ; “ This is the reason of so much carnal profession and barrenness in Christianity ; when the hearts of men turn the nature of the Gospel, which is a *law of grace* and obeyed only by faith, into the similitude of the *law of Moses*, and make it a matter of man’s working, and subject it to the poor and lame endeavours of unrenewed man ; not remembering, or at least not understanding, that the tree must first be made good, before the fruit can be good.”*

* DORNEY’s *Contempl.* p. 131, edit. 3. See also much upon these subjects in LUTHER’s *Comment upon the Galatians* ; a book of inestimable worth, and which cannot be too much attended to in times like these, when the principles of the Reformation, or rather of the Gospel itself, are avowedly slighted by some, and artfully depraved by others.

§ 68. While men *lean to their own understandings*, and depend upon themselves; while, instead of a spirit of self-renunciation and inward humility, they encourage themselves in the fortitude or stout-heartedness of their own unchanged nature; little is to be expected from them of piety or good works; or, if these should seem to appear, there is reason to believe that they are unsound in their root, and are displayed either to nourish self-confidence within, as the principle of hope, or ostentatiously obtain from without the praise and approbation of the world. *A good tree only can bring forth good fruit.* But the tree which is corrupt, though its fruit may appear as fair as the apples of Sodom, can be within, or intrinsically to the possessor, nothing but ashes or poison.

§ 69. It is also worthy of observation, that almost all heresies, whether
antient

antient or modern, whatever may be their differences in other points, seem heartily to unite in this — the assertion of man's free will and power, with little or no respect to God's free will or sovereign agency and disposal. Into this grand error, as into one common sink, they run and coalesce; and hence they have generated other corruptions, various and multiform, which, from being (as it were) the maggots of a putrid sordes, ascend at last, like pestiferous insects, to fly abroad into the world, and produce and scatter their mingled and pernicious broods, for the continual molestation and perplexity of mankind. As Luther said upon another occasion; though their heads, like Sampson's foxes, may seem to be turned towards different ways, yet one string ties them all together by the tail. They are constantly united in the strong
bond

bond of their own free will and confidence in themselves.

§ 70. The following fact deserves likewise the most serious consideration. Whenever revivals of religion have taken place in the Church, either in the larger bodies which compose a nation, or in the smaller assemblies of particular districts, they have almost uniformly succeeded through the zealous promulgation of the doctrines of grace, and of free justification through faith in the righteousness of Christ. While these great truths have been earnestly inculcated and maintained, a proportionate ardor of lively profession, leading the souls of men into deep concern for religion and duty, has in most cases been blessed as the consequence. In the next generation, perhaps, which has too often learned the principles of their predecessors more by the head than the heart, or
more

more from the exercise of the natural understanding than the impression of grace ; it has been seen, that a gradual declension in zeal, in liveliness, in practice, has also followed up a deviation from doctrine and principle. In many instances, under this declension, men have become speculatists and reasoners upon divine things, rather than humble and implicit followers of that blessed Jesus, who is “ the Author and Finisher of the Faith ” of his people, and whose *plain determination in his written word is and ought to be their primary rule and authority*. The next step, in this sad departure from original truth, has usually been an entire yielding up the mind to arguments and motives merely rational or metaphysical, till by these the head has been turned away from the truth of God, by the doubtful conjectures of men ; the heart has be-

come

come gradually alienated from the simplicity of the Gospel, deadened to the spiritual influence which it preaches, quickened in proportion to the pride of the flesh or the applause of the world, and at length sunk into a poor, vapid, wordy, and worldly, profession of religion at best, or too often into a conduct and conversation altogether foreign to the doctrine of the cross and the spirit of the Redeemer. Men of name, too, the teachers of others, may grow up in this way so extremely wise and rational, as to renounce the very word *evangelical*; and it will be well if the *thing*, signified by that name, in the end may please them. People rarely quarrel with significant and well-known terms, but from a secret distaste, if not ignorance, of the principles, for the explanation of which those terms are employed. These declinations or swer-

vings from the purity of revealed truth should therefore be, not only matters of cursory notice, but of serious and lasting warning, at all times, to those who "name the name of Jesus," lest from one gradation to another they also fall, first into heresy of principle, and then, as an almost necessary consequence, into some of the numerous species of iniquity.

§ 71. The Holy Spirit rarely blesses, and cannot be expected to bless at all, any other than his own sound or unsophisticated truths. These lead, and always lead, the soul immediately to Christ, as the great foundation of faith and hope, and the pure spring of life and holiness. And therefore those preachers, or writers, who, instead of pointing to the Saviour and the Holy Spirit, are directing men, more or less, to their own powers, to rational investigations of spiritual things, to metaphysical

physical inquiries concerning divine truth, or to fine-spun theories of human invention, all of them opposite to the plan and simplicity of the Gospel, have their reward in cold unanimated hearers, or uninfluenced and useless attentions. Rarely do even sounder doctrines possess the happy effect of truly converting sinners, when adorned with the meretricious splendors of man's wisdom, with a labored style, with ornamented flourishes, with the glitter of human wit or oratory, employed too much for the purpose of gaining human applause. Too often, in these cases, — “The sheep look up, but are not fed.” God generally leaves man to himself, when man looks rather to himself than simply to his God. Nor do real Christians receive content or edification from classical elegancies of expression, or studied points borrowed

from antient heathens, who neither knew God nor themselves. *Things*, not *words*, are the food of their souls; things, communicated by the Author of all wisdom, in the plainest and most appropriate terms; things, growing out of truth, infallible and divine, filling the heart with a lively hope of a blissful immortality, and preparing the mind for its perfect enjoyment. On the other hand, fine and admired discourses, barren of this gracious substance, may cause men to be charmed with the preacher or writer, but they lead them not from the play-house, or the card-table, or fashionable amusements, or sordid views and endeavours, or, in short, from the corrupt and degenerated spirit and expectations of the world. These *tinkling cymbals* are seldom owned to the change of heart, and consequently to no real change of life and of practice.

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The profession may alter; but the world to such will still be the same. Preachers of this sort may seem, like instruments of music, to sound well; but they only sound. And their hearers go off as from a concert; admiring the tunes and the performers perhaps; but neither duly fed nor properly informed. The utmost that can be expected to result, or that usually does result, from this trash and tinsel of man, is a specious reformation of manners, a sanctimonious countenance upon some occasions, incidental benefactions to the poor, or other circumstances of an exterior kind; while the heart remains dead as a stone to the life and knowledge of God, and fully possessed by what is contrary to him. All this shall be christened, it may be, with the name of cool and rational religion, of wise, of learned, of eminent piety; but, alas! the soul continues,

continues, as before, in its own opinion, *always a Christian* ; never deficient in itself, full of its own resources, going on in a high and pompous superbiety of heart towards heaven. To speak with such of deep internal self-mortification, of being unseen and seeking to be unseen of man, of sweet devotedness of soul to God in Christ, of meek submission to his will, of a heart crucified to the world and deadened to the spirit of the world, of living upon Christ as the source and fulness of every thing divine and holy; of desiring to be, to do, to suffer, whatever may most promote the glory of the Saviour, and most advance the person's own fellowship and enjoyment of him in all things ; the whole and every part of this is, like the language and religion of Canaan to the nations round it, either mere incomprehensible nonsense, or wild and enthusiastic dreams.

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Let them be tried with this sacred touchstone; and they will soon discover the base metal of which they are made: — *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

§ 72. Here, again, one cannot but repeat the reflection, how often the lamentable case has occurred, in the History of the Church, when ministers have fallen, in almost any degree, into the false and pernicious opinions of man's wisdom, or strength, or righteousness, as the immediate or procuring cause of salvation, that both themselves and the people under their charge have proportionably declined into a cold, irregular, and inanimate, profession; that the latter, instead of *pressing to hear*, or the former labouring to preach; with what difficulty, if not reluctance, have

have they been brought together, as to a task, for public worship ; and respecting their private life afterwards—O how poor and miserable, as to the real knowledge and spiritual enjoyment of heavenly things ! Error in fundamentals, though small at the beginning, like the noxious “ fly in the pot of ointment,” which by degrees contaminates and corrupts the whole mass, or, (to use the Apostle’s figure,) as the corrosive *canker*, *eating* wider and wider, will insinuate itself, if grace prevent not, into the whole frame of Christian doctrine and Christian life, and poison, debilitate, and destroy, wherever it extends.

§ 73. It is always a good sign for a preacher, when the poor and the despised of the world press to hear the word, and hang, as it were, upon his mouth ; when the aisles are filled as well as the seats ; and when, instead
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of exchange of compliments and idle or irreverent discourses, the people pass off in silent reflection, as though they seriously meant to carry something of what was said, within their hearts quite on to their homes.

§ 74. Whatever is effectually done is the work of the Spirit of God: And among the poor and the humble it may most generally be observed. The higher classes have their peculiar temptations, and mostly from what are thought to be their peculiar advantages. In these, it is only the grace now mentioned, which can in any degree subdue the love of earth, the desire of human applause, the anxiety to be well with the worldly Great and worldly Wise; which can estimate truly the honours, the satisfactions, the interests, of this perishing world; which can fill the heart with a just and holy indifference either for the con-

tempt or the censure of the irreligious and profane. Without the influence of this Divine Spirit, the rich man perhaps more than the poor, either with or without a religious profession, is a slave to fame or to fear, and can venture no farther upon such subjects as these than he can feel himself supported by the private opinion of friends, or the public sentiment of mankind. For this reason evidently, God sends to his people, of the higher ranks in life, sometimes sorer rebukes than poverty itself in their connections, that, under his own gracious impressions, he may wean them from vanity and conceit respecting themselves and their situation or attainments, and give them a noble superiority over the contumely or the approbation of sinful and perishing men. If they are brought to enjoy the sense of God's love in Christ, and
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the testimony of their own conscience, they can leave, with humble submission, their character and earthly concerns to his own wise and merciful disposal, who will always do what is right, and who hath promised that all shall eventually concur for their good. They are made wise, and become truly exalted, by being made humble: and so truly sublime is the grace of humility, that God himself is infinitely more humble than the best of his creatures either are or possibly can be; for, he looks down with pity and attention upon persons and circumstances, that the most gracious of us feel a secret disparagement, not merely to associate with or regard, but even to think of with complacency.

§ 75. Considerations like these are of immense importance, and reach far beyond the puny concerns of this turbulent and anxious world, and the

narrow bounds of time. Death is fast approaching towards myself and my reader: and, though it be trite, yet it cannot be too often reflected upon as true, that it is a solemn and a fearful thing to die. The stupidity of wickedness alone can trifle with that reflection. The dread of death is felt even by the beasts, and has pervaded the whole creation, since the Almighty righteously *smote the earth with* this natural *curse*, on account of sin. We continually see the sick and the dying around us, languishing fast away by disease, suffering the tortures of excruciating pain, enduring innumerable species of misery, anticipating often, with the most thrilling horrors, the rapid approach of the king of terrors, the gloomy dissolution of the grave, and (what is worse than these) feeling the keen and dismal touches of an opening eternity; — things, all overwhelming,

whelming, and all unavoidable! — The eye may then look round, in the wildness of fear, upon attending friends, for assistance or support; but, alas! these have none to give. They need the balm of hope, perhaps, for themselves. The trembling nerves, in the mean time, relax apace; the heart throbs with unabating pangs; a dark and universal horror agonizes the frame. Meanwhile, the body sinks on, from moment to moment, towards the dust, with melancholy groans; and the soul, as long as it can exhibit perceptions, discovers a solicitude, an anxiety, an agony of distress, which cannot be uttered. O how awful this condition of unawakened man; at once so uncertain, and yet so sure! — What, then, (may we earnestly ask,) what can animate the spirit of any man, or give it courage and consolation in the midst of these accumulated distresses; what

what can enable it to look, with courage unappalled, upon that tremendous, eternal, abyss, now widely opening to the eye, into which, in a moment, it must for ever plunge? — The moment is come, and the plunge is inevitable! — But *where* and *how* shall it find the sure deliverance, which it needs, from the wild, dark, and horrible, precipitation into ruin! — Let us turn our view to the death-bed of the Christian. Let us consider his end, and mark his hope and his peace. And O what joy, in that trying hour, does the Spirit of Faith frequently yield to the child of God! With what calm confidence is he privileged to look to THE EVERLASTING ARMS, which have promised to support the soul in its passage to the world unknown! What a clear perception of understanding, what full assurance of hope, have been often enjoyed by the

the faithful, when they have encountered all that is terrible to nature ; — divested indeed of mortal help, for this battle must be fought alone ; yet, in another respect, not alone, because amply assisted by help divine ! — This, this is the gracious appearance of the finger of God, who leaves his people in no extremity, and certainly not in the last, nor for ever. They are made to know, and now they believe firmly, that their Redeemer hath given to them *eternal life*, and of course a life *perfect* and *unalterable*. To this gift they experience the addition of another ; — he causes them to *feel* and to *rejoice* in its possession, frequently before its perfect enjoyment in glory. — And is this *thy* expectation, O reader ? — Let me eagerly ask myself, too ; Is it *mine* ? — Let us *both* inquire, with an anxious scrutiny, into the ground of our hope ;
let

let us pass over it again and again, with the book of God in our hands ; lest we should be deceived,—irrevocably, eternally, deceived ! If we are in the right, it must be, according to that oracle of truth, upon the principles of GRACE, and not upon *the rudiments of the world* or of fallen NATURE. We shall have, not only these external evidences of truth, which apply to our natural understanding, and which indeed stand upon such strong and invincible facts as may yield the most clear conviction to the mind ; but also those internal proofs, which have entered into the experience of faithful men from age to age, and which, brought into the heart by similar experience to us, will give the most lively and irresistable demonstration, that God is faithful and just, and that he hath never called upon the children of men to believe a lie, or to hope

hope in vain. Then, O Christian, these doctrines of Grace, and the heart-felt experience of their reality and power, wrought in thee by the Holy Comforter, who first led thee to Christ, and taught thee to build thy whole confidence upon his atonement and righteousness, will appear to be fixed upon a rock absolutely firm and impregnable. Thou wilt also find the sweetest honey from this rock, and a reviving cordial indeed: A cordial, which shall gladden thy heart amidst all the pangs of death, and exhilarate thy spirit in the nearest prospect of the grave. This it hath done to numberless multitudes of thy brethren before thee :*

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* In addition to that practical and lively proof of these truths, related by Dr. DODDRIDGE in his life of Colonel GARDINER, the reader may find another, almost similar, in the memoir of Mr.

HE is still *faithful who hath promised*. Then shall the vastness of eternity lose its former sad and tremendous gloom. The chearing beams of the Sun of Righteousness shall shine through its darkest recesses, shall dispel the clouds of sin and the blackness of sorrow, shall render the whole unbounded expanse beautiful, bright, and chearing, before thee. — Surely, can this be less than the gracious work of an omnipotent hand, thus to *create light* and peace within the soul of a drooping sinner; thus to abolish death and hell

Mr. *William Howard*, by that excellent and learned minister of Hull, the late Rev. *Joseph Milner*. In reading these indisputable testimonies, the serious Christian will rejoice to find, that “the Lord’s hand is not shortened,” but can save, as in the days of old, the most atrocious of sinners, in a way far above the reach of human means, and therefore conspicuously his own, from the worst and most deplorable extremities.

before

before him; thus to *present him*, in all the tranquillity of faithful courage, *without spot of sin unto salvation!* And yet this our unerring and undeceiving God can, doubtless, perform for thee, for me, for millions yet unborn. He will indeed perform all that is right in this behalf; because he is engaged by his covenanted truth, by his own immutable oath, to *do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think*, not to one only, but *to every one that believeth*;—to every one, who, renouncing all confidence in the *flesh* and *abhorring all false ways*, is enabled, simply and truly, to cast every interest of body and soul, of time and eternity, upon his faithfulness and promise, in sweet submission to his wise, and gracious, and sovereign, disposal.

§ 76. THE SUM of the whole matter, both in doctrine and practice, ap-

pears to be this: That man, through the fault and corruption of his nature derived from his original parents, is inclined to nothing but evil, and for this evil nature and its evil fruits deserves God's wrath and damnation. That this infection of nature, called in Scripture *flesh, leaven, corruption*, has nothing in it but that lust, wisdom, sensuality, affection, or desire, which is contrary and not subject to the law of God. That he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God; but must stand indebted for all this to the grace of God by Christ preventing (or going first before) him, that he may have a good will, and working with him, when he has it. That no man is *accounted** righteous

* These words, *accounted righteous through the merit of Christ*, are of the same import with
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righteous before God, but only through the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ,

the merit of Christ imputed; because they do not refer to a righteousness *inherent* in the subject, but to a *gift* bestowed upon it, and thus *reckoned* as its own. It stands upon equal ground with the transfer of sin to Christ; for, as the sins of God's people were imputed to Christ, and he took upon himself all the consequences of that imputation; in like manner, Christ's righteousness, which he paid to the law, is imputed to them, and they enjoy every benefit and blessing resulting from it, in their union with him. Thus he, as their High Priest and Forerunner, is for them entered into the Holiest of all, clothed in the white robes of his own unspotted righteousness; and they, in their several orders and times, follow him into the heavens, arrayed with the white raiment, *received from him*, and therefore made so entirely their own, as to be called *the righteousness of saints*. See Rom. iv. in which chapter our translators have rendered the same word by *counted*, *reckoned*, *imputed*, in which way only a sinner can appear *perfectly righteous* (for none

Christ, by faith, and not for his own works or deservings; and, therefore, that a believer is justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort to him, and to him only. That good works are the fruits, not the causes, of Faith, and follow after, not precede, Justification; but, either before or after, cannot put away sin, nor endure the strict severity of God's all-searching judgment. That they are however as indispensable to prove both to ourselves

none can for a moment appear otherwise) before God in his glory. As to the doctrine of *imputation* itself, it runs through the Law, and the Prophets, and the whole Word of God. Without it, sacrifices would have been useless, which were instituted for vicarious atonement. Without it, also, Christ would have lived and died in vain for his people; as neither his blood could have availed for the remission of sin, nor his righteousness for justification to life eternal.

and

and others a true and lively Faith, and do as necessarily spring out of it, as though they were the absolute grounds of Justification itself before God, or of Salvation. That all works, done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, and not being the offspring of faith in Christ, are so far from making men meet, or from preparing them, to receive grace, or to deserve the congruity, or concurrence, or subsequent support of grace, that they are, being wrought, not according to the will and word of God, but according to the will of the flesh, only sinful as to their cause and nature, and are at best (as one calls them) *splendida peccata*, shining and specious sins. That no man can fulfil the Law of God, and much less over-fulfil it. That Christ, bearing human nature, was the only one born of that nature without sin; and he was
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thus born, that he might be a pure sacrifice, a lamb without spot, for the sins of the world; that is, for every one, Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free, who should come unto God by him. That there is no perfection in man, or in the flesh, not even in the regenerate; but that such may fall, and be restored again by the grace of God to newness of life. That there is a spiritual people, named *the Church*, which signifies *The called of God*, chosen in Christ out of mankind, as vessels made to honor, according to the everlasting purpose and constant decree, secret to man, of the three Persons in the unity of the Godhead, styled in the original Scriptures JEHOVAH ALEHIM; that these *secret ones* are called according to God's purpose, by his Spirit working in due season; that they through grace, and not of themselves, obey
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the calling, are justified freely, are made sons of God by adoption, are transformed by the renewing of their mind into the image of Christ, do walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, attain to everlasting felicity. That the *godly* consideration of Predestination and Election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable, comfort to *godly* persons, who are such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, or those works which proceed from their fleshly mind and their earthly members, and drawing up their thoughts and desires to high and heavenly things; as well because it doth *greatly establish and confirm their faith* of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth *fervently kindle their love towards God*; but that, to all *curious*

and *carnal* persons, *lacking the Spirit of Christ*, this doctrine is by the devil made an occasion of stumbling, or of most dangerous downfall, either for desperation or for the utmost abandonment of divine truth, which is usually attended by other false principles, or by “the wretchlessness of most unclean living.”

§ 77. These are the proper sentiments of the real Christian. They are also the sentiments of the Church of England; and not only of the Church of England, but of the general Reformation from the errors of Rome. They are the sentiments and doctrines of the primitive Christian Church in its purest ages. They were and are also the sentiments, doctrines, and experience of that “mystical Body of Christ,” the Holy Catholic Church of the Faithful from the beginning of the world. All these have lived under their

their impression, and often sealed them with the sincerest testimony of their blood. These principles shine throughout the inspired writings of the Prophets and Apostles, and combine together in one gracious analogy, equally bright and beautiful to every spiritual eye, which is opened to behold it. They are, above all, the Word, the Voice, the Truth, of the everliving and unerring God.

§ 78. Whosoever, therefore, contradicts and renounces these fundamental Doctrines of Salvation, or does not receive and maintain them according to the fair and obvious sense of the Confessions which state them, has no just claim to be considered as a member or minister of those Churches which were established upon such confessions; certainly not of the Church of England, which by authority declares, that no member of it “shall

put *his own* sense or comment to be the meaning of an article (and much less a *double* or *equivocal* sense, and, least of all, those “mental reservations,” of which Jesuits have been accused), but shall take it in the *Literal* and *Grammatical* sense.” If he belong not to these constituted Churches, who in essential principles agree with the visible and invisible Church of Christ from the beginning of the world; what must such a one be; and to whom or to what does he belong? If his faith be not *the faith of God’s Elect*, may we not suspect, that it will turn out at last to have been a very delusive and a very dangerous opinion? And to what end, to what a train of other mischievous principles, may not a serious error in the premises, like one in the first figures of a calculation, unavoidably lead him? He can be sure of no religious truth,

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but as it stands revealed in his Bible, or clearly accordant with it : And will he follow, instead of this exact criterion, his own carnal and short-sighted reason, or the similar reasonings of *men whose minds must be corrupt*, if they are either *destitute of the truth*, or, what is much the same, if they venture beyond or fall short of it ?

§ 79. It is not enough, that such a one has the name, the title, or the preferment, of a minister and member of the Church of England : He is, in very deed, a Dissenter ; and a Dissenter of the worst and (because of his contrary profession) of the lowest and basest kind. This Church is not to be known merely by buildings, or habits, or preferments ; but by those solemn and acknowledged declarations, which have been established by public laws, and avowed upon oath to be *ex animo*, or the heart-felt, sentiment and belief of
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of every man, admitted to its holy offices. I shall not stay in this place to lament the perjury, the gross and horrible sin of perjury, which threatens to sink the excellent fabric of our Church into ruins, and to multiply Schisms and Separatists without number ; but it may most truly be averred, that if a strict and formal oath to the Church cannot bind a man to its principles ; then any oath, taken without a sense of its importance, or with a mind and sense in real contradiction to its object, either for worldly honour or *for filthy lucre's sake*, stamps the person, so taking it, for a bold and rank Non-conformist ; and, may I not seriously add, for a Heretic and Hypocrite of the worst description, for whose moral turpitude in the case it is hard to find a name. He not only appears to be a Schismatic of the basest kind, but the great occasion of deplorable schisms and

and separations to perhaps well-disposed, though uninformed, people about him. When such men come to appear before God, as they shortly must, with this *lie in their right hand*; what — what will they have to answer to the inquiry, — “How, and for what purpose became ye Shepherds? And how fed ye, or attended, the flocks committed to your charge?”*

§ 80.

* The following description of true divines, drawn by one who was himself of great eminence, is submitted both for its beauty and use to the consideration of those whom it may peculiarly concern: “Non ad calidarum disputationum rixas instructi, non novarum inventionum opinione turgidi, non tumidi sermonis ampullis, et sesquipedalium verborum inaniis, se apud plebem juveniliter jactantes, non ambitionem vitæ fastum simplicitati apostolicæ et cruci Christi anteponentes; sed humiles, modesti, mansueti, pacifici, simplices et sapientes tamen, prudentes atque efficaces evangelicæ fidei ac pietatis præcones,

§ 80. It may also be well for such men, such *innovators* of the doctrines of the Church, to “reflect (in the words of a learned Prelate, used indeed for another purpose), that, while they bring every thing within *private* suggestion, they encourage in religion the very principle, which in politics has proved so fatal to the peace and good government of states; being no other than that of *giving the reins to PRIVATE OPINION IN OPPOSITION TO PUBLIC* (and, I may add, long-established) *AUTHORITY.*”*

§ 81. There is also another point, which may strike some of these persons with the more attention, as it may affect their own private or temporal

cones, Dei reverentes, magistratum honorantes, fraternæque unionis studiosi.”

* *Bishop of Oxford's Charge.*

interest.

interest. The world cannot be expected to value any *means*, but for the *end* to which they serve. The end of a public ministry is the due worship of God, including in that idea the promotion of human happiness and salvation. Now, if land-holders and others, who think they have an interest in whatever they pay to the Church, observe, in those appointed to instruct them and their households in the principles and practice of religion, a vehement and predominant regard for honours, wealth, pleasure, or other low and sordid pursuits, with small concern for the sublime duties of their holy office; what can such ministers expect, and how will they answer for themselves? They have indeed the law, at present, on their side; and, as a sincere member of the established Church, I pray God that they may always have it; for, it will be a

deplorâble day to the nation as well as to them, when a proper maintenance is denied to the ministers of the Gospel, or when the present system of maintenance, agreeable as it is to the primitive institution of God's Church, shall be changed or mutilated: But, will not the infidel, the scoffer, the irreligious, and the yet more irreligious by clerical neglect, find some additional weight to their base designs against the establishment, in the very conduct of those clergymen, who not only forget the importance of their own character and the honour of the Church to which they belong, but really that private interest, which seems most of all dear to them, and which, when their principles and behaviour shall be thought either intolerable or unnecessary, must also fall to the ground? I most heartily hope, that no schisms on the one hand, nor heterodoxies

terodoxies and ill conduct (which generally go together) on the other, may ever pull down the sacred pile to which I allude: And I am persuaded, that, if an event of so much misery should ever occur, it will be principally owing to the faults and vices of the clergy themselves. Were they more generally what every good man must wish them to be, dissension and schism would be put out of countenance, and lose the worst part of their influence in the land.

None but a vitiated appetite can fancy a nauseous or insipid hash, made up of foul and unwholesome ingredients, accompanied with a viand of some liquor, either vapid, putrid, or dead. Apply this to the feeling of the mind, which hath *tasted the good word of life*, and obtained a spiritual discernment; and can it be supposed that such a one can relish the heterogeneous

compound of Arianism, Socinianism; and Pelagianism, mingled with some hard and dry scraps from Plato, Epic-tetus, Seneca, and other heathens altogether ignorant of divine revelation; and served up, perhaps now and then, with some “maggots of corrupted texts;” all of which is more or less too much the dish and the sauce of many? But, can this be wholesome diet for a Christian? Is it likely to incline those, who regard no religion, to partake of such tasteless and unprofitable fare? Or, does it not rather deserve the name of poison itself than of food, or spiritual nourishment, which is the proper use of all preaching?

Much complaint has been made of the conduct of the Laity, and, it must be owned, too justly. But no reformation, however, can fairly be expected in the members, unless it begin at the head. To censure, therefore, the one, without

without a due correction of the other, is such a *υπερον προλεπον*, such a hopeless inversion of order, as may discover indeed great zeal for the interests of a profession, but not too great earnestness for the proper success or employment of it.

These things are not said with pleasure, but with grief. I love the Church; and I know, that all good clergymen, of whom there are undoubtedly many, lament over the failings of these unworthy brethren, as tending to sap the foundation of that excellent fabric, whose form or architecture cannot be too much admired, nor the lax manner of cleansing or keeping it clean too much deplored.

In many cases also, it must be owned, that the clergy are hardly dealt by. Their general subsistence is less, in proportion to the value of other property, than it ought to be; and

and this is, in a great measure, owing to the substitution of a modus for tithe, which was God's ordinance for his ministers, and which therefore can never be altered for the better by the wisdom, and certainly not by the contrary disposition, of man. Whenever the clergy of this land receive, instead of tithe, their support from the general purse of the public; they will find themselves presently in the situation of needy and dependent pensioners; and our ecclesiastical constitution will pine away, and its property become the ravage of greedy and powerful laymen. It may then vanish by one hostile vote, or be swept off by the single stroke of a pen.

And when the ecclesiastical establishment is once dissolved, other detestable changes may be expected to occur, not less fatal to the peace and interest of the state, than to the general profession

profession of the Christian religion. It is almost unnecessary to quote the awful example of a neighbouring country. Among other effects of such a catastrophe, lay impropriations and the other property, originally plundered from the church, and now devoted to secular advantage only, cannot be expected to escape from the general wreck; having originally no foundation in right, but what was instituted for the support of the national ministry, and therefore will either stand or fall with it.

When one considers all these circumstances, and adds to them the growing dissipation, licentiousness, spiritual ignorance, and irreligion, of the laity; one cannot but tremble for the welfare and safety of the country.

§ 82. In addition to these important reflections, it may not be useless to consider, what *effects* heterodox principles

ciples commonly have with the people, upon whom they are inculcated.

§ 83. With *sincere* persons, whose consciences are awakened, and who are really in earnest for the things of salvation, every departure from the purity of truth is, in proportion to the degree of departure, attended with darkness and confusion, with multiplied and intricate doubts, with distressing thoughts, if not concerning the Gospel itself, yet respecting their own privileges and interest in it; and hence their walk is naturally uneven, because their faith is weak and unsteady. It will probably be found, that they either do not apprehend, or are taught to be afraid of, God's covenanted mercy in Christ; though they can rightly rejoice only in the clear prospect and hope of such a blessing, They tremble perhaps at that bugbear of the world, God's sovereign
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and electing grace, and can take hold of no comfort from his everlasting love, though they would be most happy to believe, that with his own *loving-kindness he hath drawn them*. They look sometimes at the blood of the Lamb, but cannot fully accept it as their only remedy, and as their sure and irrevocable consecration to holiness and to God. Something of their own must, they think, or perhaps they have been told, be constantly added to render the work of Christ and his Spirit efficacious; and therefore, not relying simply and entirely upon the worth and bounty of the Redeemer, they are involved in unholy distrusts of his promises, and too often proceed to dispute against what they do not clearly understand; so that, if let alone, they sometimes go on from doubting and disputing against the great fundamentals of

Christianity, till they plunge into such gross errors and disorders, as disgrace its very name.* Those of them, who dread a termination like this, cannot but live in cloudy sorrow and anxious dread, totally unworthy of their profession or of themselves; and when the Lord by his Spirit is pleased to open their eyes to discern his truth clearly, and to seal instruction upon their hearts concerning the unchanging certainty of his covenant, as he sometimes vouchsafes to do, and particularly before their departure from the world: how do they admire the good-

* “No light, no hope, no strength, for duties spring,
“Where Jesus is not prophet, priest, and king.”

Thus sings the Rev. R. ERSKINE, in his Gospel-sonnets; — a little volume of poems, which, however deficient in versification, display a rich fund of gracious attainment and experimental knowledge in the things of God.

ness of their heavenly Father, thus by faith discovered ; and how much are they astonished at their former hard and unbelieving thoughts concerning that mercy, which is the sure portion of all convinced and all repentant sinners ! They now see that, to distrust God, is to dishonour him ; and, with sweet contrition of spirit, can ask themselves the Lord's gentle question of reproach ; *O thou of little faith ! wherefore didst thou doubt ?*

All this experience perfectly accords with the observation of an excellent Christian of the last age, that as “ leaves will not put life into the tree,” so the soul must first “ rely upon Christ to receive life from him. All life lies in the root, and comes thence by naked believing ; whereby God, through Christ, vents his own life by mere grace into the soul, that all actions of holiness may be no other

than the life of God working within it.”*

There are some, however, who suppose, that it is quite enough for a Christian to understand and believe a few fundamentals of our holy faith, and to attend principally to their tempers and practice upon these, without going into farther researches or difficulties.

Though in matters of *doubtful disputation*, the rule is, that he, who is *weak in the faith*, is not to be exercised with them; and though *strong meat* is not fit *for babes*, but only the *sincere milk of the word*; yet, so far is there any injunction for believers always to continue babes, that the apostolic exhortation is, that they should *grow in grace and in the knowledge*

* DORNEY's *Contempl.* p. 153, Edit. 3.

of our *Lord and Saviour* ; always adding, to this increase of grace and knowledge, those fruits or effects, which specifically and peculiarly belong to it. There is but too much cause to fear, that, when the mind is uninformed, it will not only be unsteady in practice, but be exposed to those poisonous tenets and insinuations of crafty and cunning adversaries, lying in wait to deceive, without having the means, or a sufficient portion of understanding and experience, to repel them. Can any real Christian be afraid to know more of *the height and depth, and length and breadth, of the love of Christ*, than he at present does ? It may well be doubted, that, if any man can entertain such an opinion, he *knows nothing yet, as he ought to know* ; and that his heart remains too cold to the things of God, and too much alive to the opinion or
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the things of the world. He, that had a rich mine before him, would be thought rather weak and insensible to its value, if, instead of getting deeper and deeper into the precious ore, he should content himself with looking at the surface, and leave the richer part of the property untouched and unexplored.

Besides, it may be thought, without much breach of charity, that the people, who can talk at this rate, though (like writers of romance) they may ingeniously draw fine characters upon paper, are at the bottom really afraid of the free and sovereign dispensation of the grace of God. This is the great *stumbling-stone and rock of offence* to almost every unrenowned mind, whose highest views go no farther than the employment and exaltation of poor animal nature in its passions and powers, which, in severe trials and temptations,

tions, will ever, like *Belshazzar* in the balance, be *found wanting*. There is nothing in fallen nature, which can to any just purpose be substituted for grace, or can *endure* like it.

True knowledge can hurt no man. The sciolist only in divinity, as in other things, is the most liable to be puffed up. “The clearest light (said a late Bishop) is ever necessary to guide the most important actions,” even in temporal affairs. “And whatever the world thinks, he who hath not much meditated upon God, the human mind, and the *summum bonum*, may possibly make a thriving earth-worm, but will most indubitably make a sorry patriot and a sorry statesman.”

§ 84. Upon *insincere* and unrenewed minds, who are generally rank Pharisees at the bottom, unsound doctrines have another kind of effect. Being
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high and confident in themselves, the principles which they maintain render them yet more high and confident. Strangers to the plague and weakness of their own hearts, they fancy it possible to do, if not every thing, many great things indeed, for the attainment of grace, for the perfection of holiness, and for the security of salvation. Having no adequate sense of the present deplorable state of human nature, they are inclined to presume, that it yet contains many latent and dignified powers and capacities, which every man may exert if he will, and by the exertion of which he may, without a previous divine assistance, greatly promote his own salvation, or, at least, by such exertion, procure that assistance. In consequence of such secret presumptions, persons of this kind are commonly bitter in spirit against those truths of God, which abase or
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which show the dreadful abasement of man, are disposed to calumniate the people who profess them, are cutting and censorious in the extreme, upon the discovery of their infirmities, and imperiously rejoice, rather than silently mourn, over those falls, which nothing but the grace of the Holy Spirit, or his Providence, can prevent in any man, and which true Christians are the first to detest and deplore. Though rigid and severe towards the subjects and asserters of God's sovereign grace, these persons, under the influence of their own tempers, are often the sport of their own lusts, show a ready fondness for argument and debate, are generally slashing and personal to opponents, seek, like *Diotrephes*, a high pre-eminence, but still remain the slaves of arrogance and conceit. Like former pertinacious disputers for human ability, they are

cold and jealous respecters of the most humbling doctrines of the Gospel. These, while they pretend to guard or to qualify them, they “eye askant,” or endeavour to distort; and thus leaning upon themselves, through spiritual ignorance and hardness of heart, they are permitted either to increase in a contemptuous spirit of superciliousness, or to fall into something or other dishonourable to themselves and the very name of Christian profession. Weak, indeed, is the religion or the reason of man, if left to himself. Whatever begins and proceeds upon fallen nature only, may be expected, unless the mercy of God should interpose, to end there. Flesh is but flesh in the result; and no effect can be expected to differ essentially from its cause.

§ 85. But Christ is not a new law-giver, or the introducer of a new remedial.

medial law: He is the fulfiller in his people's behalf of the law, already revealed, both in its penal and preceptive requirements. His redeemed come into the benefit of all this, not by their doing or deserving, but under a conviction of their own guilt and weakness, by believing and receiving, or (as we have already stated) not by works of nature, but by the grace of God. They, who have not learned this humbling lesson, have yet a great deal to learn, before they attain the true knowledge of the Gospel and of their own hearts.

And here it may not be much out of our way to remark, that it seemed to be one invariable aim of the Chief Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, the men most reputed for piety and learning in the Jewish Church, to scandalize our Lord for a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, the friend of publicans

and sinners ; one who dared to profane the Sabbath by working miracles, and to eat without previously washing his hands ; one who was not satisfied with a fair demeanour or with outward duties, but pertinaciously required also (what they had not) the internal life of divine truth ; in short, a madman, and a devil incarnate. Though his whole life upon earth was an unremitted exertion of unparalleled goodness in word and deed ; yet, because his plan of doctrine urged the deepest self-renunciation in opposition to the conceit of self-righteousness, he was ignorantly treated as a deceiver, as an antinomian or subverter of the law, as an innovator, and, briefly, as that excessive malefactor, who deserved to die the death of a slave, and to be crucified as the chief between two criminals, who, though guilty of robbery, sedition, and murder, were considered as less monstrous

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and less offensive than himself. So bitterly malignant, under every species of merely human refinement, is the pretended religion of fallen man, or even a false profession of the true religion itself, to the mortifying principles and spirit of the grace of God!

§ 86. Indeed, it may be observed, that people, who have not an experimental acquaintance with *the plague of the heart*, (as it is styled in the Scripture,) are seldom or never under any apprehensions upon the score of *self-righteousness*, such as may be attained by Formalists and Pharisees, nor upon the wicked and blasphemous opposition, which that principle bears in its spirit to the whole mediation and righteousness of the Son of God. They are aware of no sins, but the sins of the flesh or the beast. Gross immoralities, and tendencies to them, they can see, and censure as they deserve;

deserve; but sins of the devil, the natural enmity of every fallen spirit against God, *the spiritual wickedness in high places*, that subtle mischief brooding in every mind, which is untaught and unchanged by divine grace; these they either do not feel, or imagine them to be peccadillos easily to be done away or forgiven. They do not truly understand, that all outward evil originates from within, and that the blood of Christ is as needful for the pardon of one guilty thought, and the Spirit of Christ for its true subjugation, as for the whole mass of sins, which have been committed from the beginning of the world. I am sensible, therefore, that these reflections, weak as they are in so great a cause, yet striking, as I hope they do, at the pride, presumption, self-righteousness, fleshly wisdom, and self-sufficiency of the unconverted

verted heart, are not and cannot be acceptable to the natural man, or the man either forming or following religion by his own powers. And perhaps it will be found upon inquiry as true now, as in the days of old, that the more high and plausible the profession of religion may be, if unattended with the grace of the Holy Spirit; the more aversion will be discovered at whatever wounds the confidence, which all men by nature delight to have, in their own understanding and worth. They cannot naturally love that which leads, by the renunciation of these, to the free grace and unspotted righteousness of the Redeemer alone, received by faith, without conditions of previous performances on man's part, and infinitely above all his deservings. The religion of the man of the earth, though the Bible may be spread before him
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and though he professes to believe in it, is *all nature—all flesh*—it *cannot receive the things of the kingdom of God* in their life and intention; but will cloud them over, and sometimes with great perverseness, by principles drawn from his own reason; and all this must end, if left of God, not in regeneration, which such a one despises for enthusiastic; but, under specious acts of outward forms and the appearances of morality, in a spiritual contempt of the most solemn truths and of those who enjoy them.

§ 87. Though it may seem a digression, yet it seems not altogether impertinent to our general subject, to observe in this place, that, upon the principles of grace, as they stand revealed in the Scriptures, the scheme which some have proposed, respecting God's *MORAL government of the world*, seems to be rather incongruous and untenable.

ble.—Neither the phrase, nor the sentiment, as stated by them, appears to be scriptural. The idea is evidently raised, NOT upon the *present* state of mankind as *fallen* and *depraved*, but upon the *supposed* or *implied capacity* of man as a *free agent*, standing *now* as in his *original* state, and *determining himself*, by himself, either to good or evil. This, if the Bible be true, is a basis fundamentally wrong; and though it may square with the opinions of heathen philosophers, both antient and modern, and with persons who form their speculations upon similar hypotheses; it appears by no means accordant with God's revealed method of salvation, or the concurrent testimony, in all ages, of his witnesses and people. That God, as a sovereign, rules, controls, superintends, and finally determines upon, all men and all things throughout his creation;

is a truth manifest and indisputable. But, that the Most High now presides over this present evil world, as in its original formation, when it came good out of his hands, and that he treats with men as creatures free to stand or free to fall as before ; all this is repugnant to truth, to fact, and to experience, and particularly to that constitution, or covenant, or kingdom, of grace, into which sinners are brought, as into the ark of old, and by means of which they can only be saved from that destruction, which ere long will overwhelm the earth. We are told, and we feel, that this is a *fallen, evil, helpless, and miserable*, world ; and therefore is not and cannot be as God made it, in any *moral* sense ; it is a world, now in a state of rebellion against its Creator ; a world, lying in open and avowed wickedness, or *the wicked one* ; a world naturally and continually

continually full of enmity against God and against the most solemn truths revealed by him ; a world, in short, immersed in sin, averse to true holiness, already under legal condemnation for its atrocities, and reserved only till the covenant of grace shall be completed on the one hand, and the measure of iniquity be filled up on the other. Now, if we represent such a world as this to be capable of perfectly moral duty, or, in other words, of obeying the law of its first creation, and thereby entitled, in any degree, to a reward or approbation of the Supreme Governor of the universe, according to the supposed plan of moral government ; can we be otherwise than greatly deceived ? Do we not, in that case, virtually set aside the Gospel, and pervert the principle of its institution ? The declared purpose of this is, to show mercy and to grant pardon,

according to the counsel of God, to poor condemned criminals, shut up in prison, and under the bondage of Satan, called *the prince of the power of the air, and the god of this world, without strength*, in themselves, and even without *will*, to do one valid act towards their release. Doth not the *strong-one armed keep his goods in peace*, though wrongfully obtained, till the one, who is *stronger than he*, shall come upon him and recover his own? Is not this the divine representation of man's present state? And is it not amply confirmed by evident proofs and experience? And is there any escape from this calamitous situation, but by the powerful grace of God, according to the plan he has made known, and through the redemption of Christ as the means of accomplishing it? Surely not. — Therefore, *he that believeth not is condemned already*

ready as a rebel, a traitor, an enemy to God and his law; and, continuing in unbelief, remains only for final decision or execution, through the justice of that law, to which some people have had the presumption to appeal for the rectitude of their lives. On the other hand, *he that believeth is justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law*; he is rescued from its sentence by the ransom of its Purifier or Redeemer, and now comes to the heavenly throne under quite a new constitution, not of nature, such as stood before the fall, but of divine and unfailing grace, in which, through adoption, God is become his Father, Christ his brother dear and precious, and the Holy Spirit his assured Comforter, Sanctifier, and Guide. How different is this method of salvation, this kingdom of Christ, of light, and of heaven, this fold and field

field enclosed, this covenant of the divine persons, (all of them terms expressive of *distinction* or *separation*,) in Jehovah, as laid down by God himself in his word ! how widely different from that scheme of *moral government*, invented by man's reason ; which excludes all grace, by putting all men into a state of full capacity and adequate advantages, contrary to fact ; and which represents God as trying, by natural causes, to banish sin out of the earth, which has never yet been done ; yea, as sending the Gospel itself chiefly for that purpose, though millions never had it extended to them, or even heard of it ? These contradictions who can reconcile ? If man were left to stand or to fall according to his own *moral* conduct, *no man living could be saved* ; for, in God's sight, considered as a *judge* only, *no man living could be justified*. The fact

fact indeed is, God prevents, by his interposition, much evil from wicked men and wicked spirits; or the world itself could not stand, nor his own designs of salvation be accomplished. But he saves men, and grants eternal life, upon a very different ground from that of being a civil judge or moral governor of the world, deciding and punishing as causes may arise; in which case, there could be no possibility of salvation, because all have sinned, and do sin continually, and consequently deserve punishment. — Those persons, therefore, who think to *work for* and *earn* life, or (treading in the steps of *Pelagius*) procure what they call grace, which upon their scheme could be nothing but *wages*, do indeed attempt to *render a price*, and not to *receive a bounty* from God; a principle of action, with the *dead works* it produces, which is wholly repugnant

repugnant to the purpose and spirit of the Gospel, and neither more nor less than the wild and insolent presumption of a poor, beggarly, fallen, rebel, still disputing and revolting against his Maker ; or of a pitiable madman, hugging his chains and strutting with a cap of straw, yet fancying himself invested with gorgeous apparel, and a diadem of royalty.*

But I would observe, for the prevention of mistakes, that there is one sense, in which God may truly be considered as a moral Governor, and that is, in the government of the hearts and lives of his redeemed people ; by whom I mean those who have entered into his new covenant or testament, through faith in the sacrifice of their Redeemer. They, indeed, are truly

* See some forcible remarks upon this subject in RICCAITOUN'S *Works*, sparsim.

under a THEOCRACY,* but wholly distinct in its operation from the common course of things in the world. This is God's *spiritual* and *gracious* government, in which all things, necessary for life and godliness, are provided in that new constitution, or kingdom, and are carried into effect by the special operation of the Holy Spirit. — Thus, the purposes of holiness are most fully secured, and secured too upon infinitely stronger grounds than they possibly could be by the poor energies of the natural man; even supposing that he had a heart so to em-

* The Jews, for a season, were under a temporal *Theocracy*; but, like other circumstances granted to that "prophetic people," this was figurative only of the spiritual œconomy above-mentioned, and was therefore discontinued. No other nation had ever that advantage, and certainly not the world at large, according to the present scheme of *moral government*.

ploy them, which he certainly has not.

But some have objected, “ How then is God to judge the world at the last day, when every secret thing shall be brought to light, and every man rewarded according to his deeds ? ” — It may be answered, in the first place, that, at this final judgement, no man will receive heaven as a reward for his moral obedience ; for, that is impossible ; all men being sinners, not only in their nature, but in every act of their lives, not excepting their holiest duties. In no point is the Scripture more express than in this, that man can never be justified by his own defective works, or escape punishment for his sins by a *partial* conformity to the divine law. If, therefore, any man is *rectus in curiâ*, or righteous before God, it must be by God’s own deed of free grace, conveyed upon
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the plan of his own revelation, in which it is maintained, that he hath so declared his righteousness, that he can at once be *just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.* Rom. iii. 24—26. In this view, there is no title of *right* in ruined sinners, such as all men are; but the whole of salvation rests upon that sure covenant, wherein *God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.*—Farther; it may be said, that there will indeed be a *reward* hereafter, though not of *debt*, but of *grace*. The redeemed will be *approved*, (Matth. xxv. 21,) not *for* their works, as being their own, for without talents given they could have done nothing; but *according to* their works, as being the fruits of faith, which the Holy Spirit effected in and by them; and therefore these are said to be *wrought in God*. The same

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kind of blessing or *reward** was *given* to the great archetype of faith, the patriarch *Abraham*, in Gen. xv. 1, not *for his working* and *deserving*, there being no hint of the kind in the text, but as the joy and crown of the

* The Hebrew word implies, not merely remuneration, but that refreshment and vigour of soul, that comfort and satiety, which are symbolized by what the body feels from drinking, when athirst, the most exhilarating liquor. The text itself shows, that *merit* was out of the case; for, Jehovah *himself* could not be *deserved* by Abraham as a reward or portion for any thing whatever, since neither he nor any one else could act for God but by his own gift; and it would be strange to say, that he merited a reward for receiving a gift, or for enjoying the gift received. The Lord hath, indeed, given HIMSELF to be the *portion* of his people, or (as the word in the above text signifies) their *full consolation*, their *satisfying possession*, their *strong support*; but, in every point of view, it is wholly *according to his abundant mercy*. So Psalm xvi. 5; lxxiii. 26, *et al.*

gratuitous

gratuitous mercy of God, which enabled him to stand forth as a pattern of firm and steady *believing*.

In the next place ; judgement will be brought forward upon the unbelieving and the ungodly, according to their deeds,—upon those, who would not have Christ to reign over them; nor accede to his plan of salvation ; and upon those, who, under the tyranny of the devil, followed the pride, the lusts, the gratifications, of their own hearts, with little or no concern about God in the matter. In that awful day, the great *separation* will be made. The sheep will be parted off eternally from the goats, among whom they were formerly mixed ; and notwithstanding the colours, the pretences, the outward appearances or the inward deceits, which rendered in many cases the latter scarcely distinguishable by men from the former ;
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all shall then be exposed to the open view of men and of angels. The specious hypocrite, the fair formalist, the false and unrenewed professor, shall in that eventful hour appear in their true shape, beyond all possibility of disguise ; while the humble children of God, obscure and unknown in thousands of instances by the world, and rejected of it when discerned ; yet living in the spirit of faith, and, according to measure, producing its genuine fruits and effects ; shall *shine forth as the stars in the firmament for ever and ever*. These two sorts of people at the resurrection for judgement will be more easily marked out by Him, *who searcheth the heart and the reins*, than now by any of us the corn can be known from the chaff which surrounds it, or wheat from those weeds and tares which spring up with it in the same field. The di-
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vision, the everlasting division, between them, will be made accordingly, with perfect precision. But if the plan of a present *moral* government were correct, and God were *now* entering into judgement with man ; this judicial determination must be always taking place, and upon earth too, and chiefly for earthly things. Thus wicked men, unrighteous and rapacious nations, with their impious or ambitious rulers, must be called to continual account for their misdeeds even here, and quickly after their commission ; or the ends of this presumed moral government, which is to keep order and minister justice, would be frustrated, and the malefactors escape with success—a position that few people, I think, will be hardy enough to maintain, on account of its obvious consequences. On the other hand ; what becomes of those called moral
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and obedient, upon this scheme, who, we know, suffer a thousand present ills from an ungodly world, and are often permitted to pass away, unpitied and unnoticed, to sufferings or to death?

Upon the whole; it appears to be untenable ground; without congruity with divine revelation, or with the general history of mankind. But Truth is harmony: Truth is analogy: Truth is unity.

To return, however, from these digressions, which seem important and to have some connexion with the subject, we may farther observe upon the *effects* of heterodox principles, of which we were treating:

§ 88. That there is another mistaken and unhappy class of men: Those, I mean, who, holding the fair principles of grace, do hold them without the grace of the principles. These, therefore,

therefore, (horrible to say!) carnally abuse the Gospel of Christ, and pervert the goodness of God into a licence for sin. And, because the most profligate of sinners have been called and saved, and thereby eminently displayed the rich mercy of God; these nefarious men have presumed, that the more they abound in sin, the more will grace abound in finally saving them. Execrable logic! Ranting and diabolical inference! But, (says the Apostle,) *How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* He, who hath an interest in Christ, is a partaker of his holiness. He, who truly knows the blessing of grace, and can fairly plead and enjoy it, is one, who hath *passed from death unto life*; who hath been *born again*, and is *renewed in the spirit of his mind*; who is left, not in his natural state, but *translated from the kingdom of darkness into the*

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kingdom of God's dear Son ; who not only hath adoption, but *the spirit of adoption*, which brings with it the heart and temper of a child to a Father of purity and love ; who *delights in the law of God after the inward man*, and hath that inward man wrought in him by the Spirit of Holiness, delivering him from the *bondage of corruption* in his outward man, or fallen nature ; who enjoys *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost*, not only in the ordinances of religion, but also in his general conduct and conversation in the world. The professor, who knows not, and who experiences not, the *power and love* of these things in his soul, may talk, and argue, and write, and preach, about grace and salvation, and “ about it and about it,” again and again, for an age, if he lived so long ; but he would

would really understand and *possess*, nothing truly of this great matter. Such a one hath not *the proper FAITH of God's elect*, but a cold, dry, speculative, unproductive notion. He cannot be *in Christ, as a new creature, or creation*; for, he lies dead, overwhelmed, *unpurged from his old sins* of corruption and carnality. Or, to use the Apostle's figures, he is one, who *feeds himself without fear — a cloud without water — a lamp without oil — a tree, whose fruit withereth, or without fruit — a raging wave of the sea, foaming out his own shame — a wandering star, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.* Nor can he, in that awful condition, know this important secret of the Lord, nor this indispensable sign of his covenant, — that those, who are *actually pardoned* through the blood of Christ, are *graciously sealed* by the

Spirit of Christ to the day of redemption. None but such receive from God true power over inward and outward sin; and this power of God, thus given and thus working in them, turns into a most convincing testimony, without which no real Christians can endure to live, that in deed and in truth, they are *the children of God, chosen in Christ*, effectually called by his Spirit, freely redeemed and fully justified, and shall finally be saved from wrath, through the faithfulness and omnipotence pledged in their behalf by the three Persons in Jehovah. Whoever hath not this testimony, is but the shadow of a Christian. And, therefore, whether a man be styled an Arminian or Calvinist, or any thing else, unless he hath the grace of God truly within him, he is and must be in reality an Antinomian. He will either pervert the law of God in its intentions,

tentions, or oppose it by facts. Let this then be written in capitals, to be seen and known of all men ; IF ANY MAN HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NONE OF HIS : And, THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH, WITH ITS AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS.

§ 89. O how great a thing is it to be a Christian ! What a mercy to be preserved from erroneous principles, and from sinful practices ! What a sweet deliverance to be kept from, or to overcome, through faith, the intoxications, the snares, the abominations, of the world, the flesh, and the devil ! And yet, who is sufficient for all this but that all-sufficient ONE, on whom *the help* of his people *is laid* for this very end ? May you and I, dear reader, constantly look to the gracious *High-Priest* of our profession, who *can be touched*, as a *Brother*, with
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*the feeling of our infirmities, being once in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin; and may we come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need! Let me add, that, thus coming, we shall never be denied, never be sent empty away. Our head-stone shall, ere long, be brought forth with shoutings, and with the triumphant cry of GRACE, GRACE, unto it.**

§ 90.

* This figurative prophecy, in Zech. iv. 7, was also in another view literally fulfilled. The LORD of Hosts did bring forth the top, or chief, or head, stone with shoutings, when the heavenly multitude sang, at the birth of Jesus, *Glory to God in the highest, &c.* An earthly harbinger was likewise expressly appointed, whose very name should farther testify, GRACE, GRACE, through this *Head-stone* to the long-expecting Church of God. For, the word JOHN, signifies

Grace

§ 90. And what is the Christian life, but a life divine, begun, continued, and ended, by the sovereign agency of God the Holy Ghost, of whose office, in several points of view, we have now been treating? With this holy life the Christian was not born into the world; no,—it was by the power of God the

Grace personified; a person, who, as a herald, was to proclaim Grace and Truth about to appear through Jesus Christ. His office, therefore, was to preach the baptism of repentance; signifying, by the outward sign and washing of water, the internal washing of regeneration and gracious renewing of the Holy Ghost, whose dispensation, when the mission of the Saviour should be fully accomplished, was to introduce (the prophetic shadows of the law being then completed) the full display and efficient power of sovereign kindness and mercy. To all this benignity of the Godhead, the Apostle strikingly alludes in Eph. i. 9, 10, and iii. 2—11, which, with Mat. xxi. 1—13, the reader will do well to compare and consider.

Spirit,

Spirit, that his soul was quickened, or first made alive, from the death of trespasses and sins. By this Holy One, he was led to see and to feel the piercing spirituality of the perfect law, and thereby brought always to conviction and sometimes to horror, not only for sins actually committed, but more expressly for the rooted, malignant, invariable, sinfulness of his fallen nature. He finds *the law to be spiritual* indeed, but *himself to be carnal, sold under sin*. By the instruction of this Spirit, enlightening and applying his holy word, and not by merely human or rational considerations or moral suasion of arguments derived from himself or others, doth the Christian obtain by the law the true knowledge of himself, and of the evil and extent of sin. He is enabled to understand, how wide a difference there is between the doubtful persuasion of carnal

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nal reason, such as that of Nicodemus, when he first came to Christ, and the gracious impression of faith by a divine power. The one, weak and inefficient in itself, may end with *a believing in vain*: the other, standing fast upon the Rock, is nourished and defended by the Most High. By the Spirit working upon his heart, through and in the law, he sinks in his first convictions, humbled, condemned, and ruined, in himself; and sometimes has been brought almost to despair of help or deliverance. But this has been according to the order of heavenly wisdom, that, upon the discovery of his relief, he may ascribe the whole, not to human help, or skill, or goodness, but solely to Him, “from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, do, and must, proceed.” By this Holy Spirit of faith, is faith produced in his soul, as one of

the first demonstrations, or one of the first effects, of genuine life within. By this faith, which is the special gift and operation of the Spirit, the Christian's mind and conscience are led up to Christ for the full remission of sins through his blood; and he, in due season, obtains a calm and rest, unknown before, in the course of staying himself upon his Saviour's atonement and righteousness. This peace with God, this tranquillity within, is the sealing testimony of the Spirit of promise, and is granted and maintained as the consolatory earnest of redemption. In consequence of this happy renovation, the Christian, like the planetary system, whose several orbs are always swift in motion, though within themselves at positive rest, becomes, and desires to become, more and more active in the service of his Lord, inwardly possess-

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ing a calmness of heart and chearful indisturbance of mind. The eyes of his understanding being enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, he is enabled to look upon Christ as the Lord his righteousness and strength, and to fix every hope upon him for a justifying title to the inheritance of glory. By the same Spirit, in the use of his infallible word, he is progressively and experimentally taught, not the rudiments of the world, not the self-determining agency of human will or human ability, not the incompetent philosophy or metaphysical attempts* of man in discussing the things of God; but what is

* Bishop HORNE says, pleasantly enough, upon these attempts, that "sometimes a man is called a learned man, who, after a course of several years' hard study, can tell you, within a trifle, how many degrees of the non-entity of nothing must be annihilated, before it comes to be something."

THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS of *his* own divine *power towards those who believe*, and that all-saving strength, in producing and preserving faith, which is so high, so extraordinary, so much above the reach of fallen unassisted man, that it is, what the Holy Spirit himself declares it to be, THE WORKING OF THAT MIGHTY POWER, *which God wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead*; in short, the great and sole work of OMNIPOTENCE itself.

Hence, by the farther continual help of this gracious Spirit, the Christian is imbued with the love of holiness; delights in the law of God freely and fervently in the inner man, in direct opposition to the flesh or outward man; is enabled to discern the motions of evil in their spring; to make conscience of his most secret thoughts, as well as of his words and deeds; to repel and overcome the sophistries

phistries of unsanctified reason and the devices of Satan ; to have no confidence in the flesh, but to rejoice in Christ Jesus and in the Holy Covenant or Constitution of Grace revealed in him ; to build all his hopes for time and eternity upon the Saviour and his unerring truth ; to love him, to serve him, to submit to him in all things, as his Prophet, Priest, and King ; and, in a word, so to be found in him, as to count all things but loss and dung in the comparison of this excellent blessing and knowledge. Thus, by the Spirit, he *lives* in the Spirit, and *walks* in the Spirit, and shows the *fruits* of the Spirit, in all holy conversation and godliness ; consulting the peace, at the same time, of the church, and promoting the love of his brethren, according to that charming passage, Gal. v. 22—25. His very *body is the temple of the Holy Ghost*, to whom

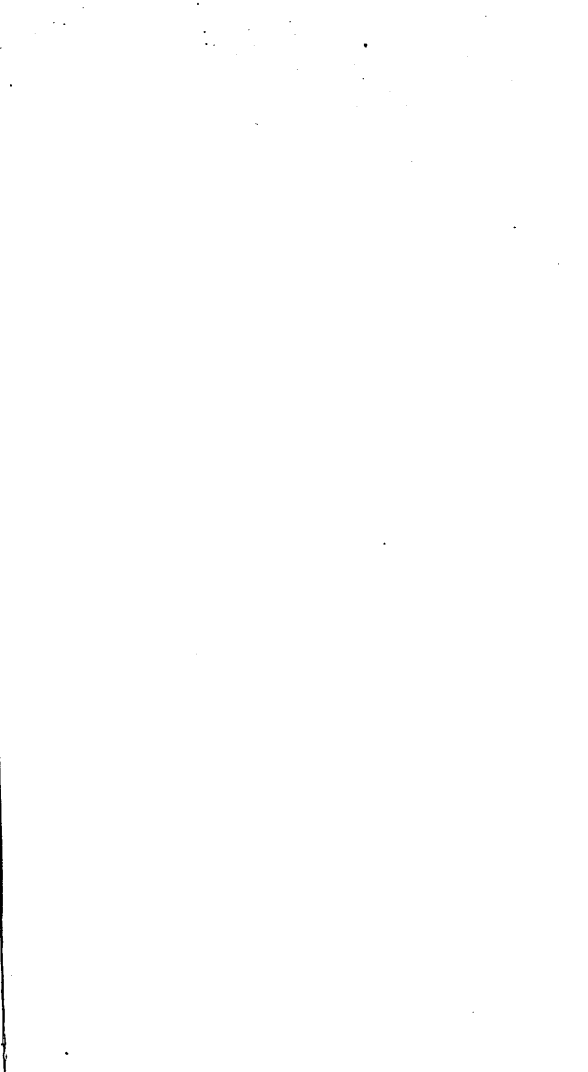
whom the very dust, of which it is composed, is sacred, and by whom it shall be raised again, in all the perfection of glory, at the last day. Finally, under the influence of this Spirit of grace and truth, he fervently prays to live and die ; as one, not of the world, nor any longer his own, but as bought with an inestimable price, and therefore bound, like one devotedly his, to glorify God in body and soul, through Jesus Christ. It is the great object of his faith to cultivate purity of doctrine, purity of heart, and purity of life : And he is enabled to pursue and to follow on in pursuing this invaluable object through the Spirit of his Lord, who grants him, in the course of his faith, improvement, consolation, firmness, and undisappointing perseverance in all truth and righteousness. In the whole of his procedure, the gracious and indispensable office of the

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the Holy Spirit is exerted and glorified. From him comes, in the first instance, the true conviction of sin by the law; then, the conversion of the soul through the Gospel; then, the gift of that faith, which embraces Christ in all his offices, and purifies the life and the heart; then, the increase of the knowledge, love, and enjoyment, of Christ in all things; and, lastly, in the fulness of time, the happy and the abundant entrance into the presence and kingdom of God and the Father. O how glorious, how ineffably glorious and sublime, is this final consummation, this endless conjunction with the general assembly of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven! How incessant and rapturous shall be the acknowledgements, the triumphant praises, then made to the glory of the eternal Trinity; How seraphic the ecstasy of bliss, when

when all, of every rank and every name, shall, in the power of the Divine Majesty, conspire to worship that Holy Trinity in Unity, world without end !

THE END.



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